TIBET ON THE IMPERIAL CHESSBOARD

THE MAKING OF BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS LHASA, 1899-1925

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To the memory of
my father, Kiran Chandra Addy
and my mother, Santi Addy

PREFACE

This book is about policy, not frontiers. It examines the course of Anglo-Tibetan relations from the high noon of the British Empire to the beginnings of its decline.

The Younghusband Mission to Lhasa in 1904 led to a bitter conflict between Lord Curzon in India and the Home Government in London. It was a clash of personalities with opposing views of Indian and imperial needs and it signalled the end of an epoch when Britain had moved alone, often defiantly, in defence of her colonial interests. The German threat before the First World War and Britain's transparent weakness after it determined that never again would she be able in Central Asia to act in the tradition of previous years.

In order fully to comprehend the options open to the British Government ; to appreciate the arguments used by the contending parties in the Tibetan debate, the present account has been placed upon the widest possible canvas. It seeks to trace the influence of international politics, whether in Europe or the Far East, on Whitehall, through the cross-currents of its global and Indian policies. This broad aspect is highlighted by the inclusion of Chinese and Mongol developments having a bearing on Tibet. These in turn are set against the backdrop of British, Russian and Chinese relationships. The principal legacy of ths period, however, is the shadow it has cast over present-day Sino-Indian relations—a subject with which I hope to deal in a succeeding volume.

The roots of this study lie in a London University doctoral thesis. The work of other writers such as Alastair Lamb, P. L. Mehra and the late Dorothy Woodman were of great help to me, even where my interpretation of events has differed from theirs.

I owe a more personal debt of gratitude to Drs Michael Laird of the Portsmouth Polytechnic and Suhash Chakravarty, Reader in Modern History at the University of Delhi, for their

critical comments and suggestions. Dr Chakravarty, whose monograph on Anglo-Afghan relations is a model of lucid scholarship, allowed me to draw on his many insights into 19th and 20th century imperial diplomacy.

Professor Nirmal Sinha, formerly of Presidency College, Calcutta, first aroused my interest in the subject and responded generously to my numerous calls on his time and labour. Dr Premangshu Banerji and Mr Nemai Nandy placed their considerable skills with maps at my disposal. Mr Prasanta Dasgupta was a constant source of encouragement in difficult days. Mr Bimal Dhur of Academic Publishers rescued my manuscript from threatened oblivion and his colleague, Mr Lakshman Ghosh, very kindly saw it through the press in record time. Needless to say, any errors or shortcomings in the book are my responsibility alone.

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Premen Addy

London, July 1984

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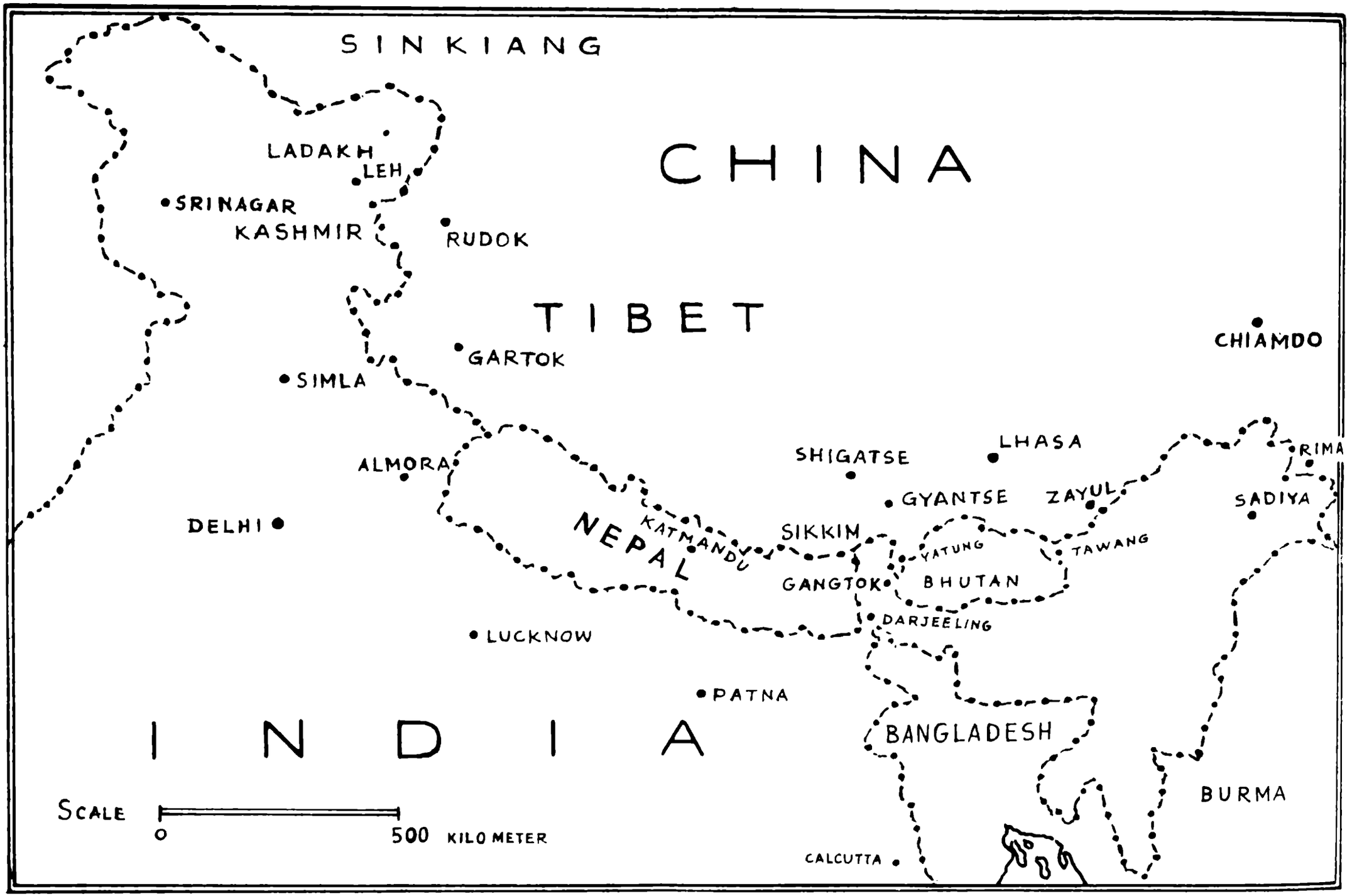

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CHAPTER 1

THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND GOVERNMENT OF TIBET

Standing like an enormous rampart on the northern wall of the Himalayan massif, Tibet is a vast plateau of about 500,000 square miles with an average elevation of 10,000 feet above sea-level. However, the country is not uniformly flat, for numerous mountain ranges run across it from a westerly direction, the best example being the Tangla.

Three broad physical divisions characterise Tibet. The Chang Tang, an area of inland drainage (1,500 miles from east to west and 400—500 miles from north to south), lying to the north is the most bleak and inhospitable. Located at an average altitude of 16,000 feet, but rising even higher in its mountains and ridges, it consists largely of a tangled mass of plains and valleys dotted by numerous lakes into which powerful local streams empty their waters. Swept perpetually by freezing winds, the Chang Tang is a howling wilderness whose landscape is relieved merely by scanty clumps of grass which provide pasture for wild yaks and sheep. Only the stray nomad tending his flock provides evidence of human life.

Southern Tibet, the second natural division, includes the valleys of the Indus and Sutlej to the west, and the Tsangpo or Brahmaputra, as it is known when it crosses into India, further south and east. Situated at the lower elevation of 7,000 to 12,000 feet, its climate is warmer, its soil more hospitable. In addition it is blessed with a moderate yearly rainfall of fifteen to eighteen inches. This indeed is the political and economic heart of Tibet.

The third natural division is Eastern Tibet, lying between the Chang Tang and China. Originating from here, and flowing in

an almost parallel course are two of South-East Asia's largest rivers, the Mekong and the Salween and also China's largest waterway, the Yangtse. The inhabitants of these parts, although of Tibetan stock and acknowledging the spiritual authority of the Dalai Lama, were generally loath to accept the political control of either Lhasa or Peking. It thus proved to be an area of fluctuating administrative boundaries, with some principalities giving their allegiance to Lhasa, others to China, a few maintaining a precarious semi-independent status, while the remainder professed total independence.[1]

This broad area was known as Kham, and its fierce warrior tribes, the Khambas, who usually sought profit in the time-honoured profession of brigandage, were widely feared by their milder brethren in central Tibet. Europeans with a direct knowledge of the country, or whose interest in it had been sustained by years of long study, were of the view that Eastern Tibet, rich in agricultural and mineral wealth, was assured of a great future[2].

Towns

The principal towns of Tibet lay in the southern and eastern regions of the country. The largest and most important by far was Lhasa, the seat of the Dalai Lama's spiritual and temporal authority and the country's capital, whose population varied between 35,000 and 40,000 in the early years of the twentieth century.

Next in order of size and importance came Shigatse, 130 miles west of Lhasa, with a population of 13,000 to 20,000. Because of the close proximity of the Tashilunpo monastery in which resided the Panchen Lama (also referred to sometimes as the Tashi Lama), Shigatse came to be regarded as Tibet's second capital.

Chamdo, in eastern Tibet, ranked third in size with its population varying between 9,000 to 12,000. Because of its strategic position astride the route from China, it became Lhasa's chief political and military centre in the east.

Gyantse, in Central Tibet, was sixty miles south of Shigatse.

Though in size it ranked below Chamdo it was of greater importance as a trade mart, and consequently its role in the history of Anglo-Tibetan relations was more significant. It lay at the junction of the Indo-Lhasa and Indo-Shigatse trade routes, 'across the breadth of southern Tibet—that part of Tibet which, being within the Brahmaputra basin, is in true geographical affinity with India in spite of the Himalayan wall'[3].

Brief reference may also be made to three other towns, notably for commercial reasons. Farthest east lay Tachienlu which marked the ethnic divide between China and Tibet, but it was as an emporium that it attracted attention. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries an annual inflow of thirteen million tons of tea arrived here from China to be packaged into bricks in the packing houses of the great tea firms, before the final haul to the interior of Tibet.

In southern Tibet at a point separating the Chumbi Valley from the main Tibetan tableland, and guarding one of the approaches to Lhasa through the Tangla range, lay Phari with its small population of 2,000. Situated at the immensely high altitude of 15,000 feet, Phari became noted for its formidable fort, its legendary dirt, and also as an *entrepot* whence came the produce of Bhutan. Perceval Landon, the *Times* correspondent who accompanied Younghusband's party to Lhasa in 1904 has left us a vivid description of the place; contrasting its 'mephitic filth to the cold and almost saintlike purity of the everlasting snows of Chumolhari.'[4]

Nearest the Indian border was Yatung which in 1890 became the first town in Tibet to be opened to British trade.

As the general incline of the country is from west to east, western Tibet with its higher altitude—even plains and valleys tend to rise over 15,000 feet above sea-level—and its sparser population, had only one important town, Gartok, around which revolved the trade between northern India and Tibet.

External Trade and Trade Routes

External trade played an important part in the commercial, social, and political life of Tibet. It was confined almost

exclusively to India, the Himalayan borderland, China and Mongolia. However, in view of the country's low social and economic development, this trade in its volume, variety and methods was significant only in relation to Tibet. Its real value would have been minimal in a more advanced society, as would its trade routes—which were no more than rough tracks used for animal and human transport, the wheel being as yet almost unknown.

One of the factors inhibiting the development of any sizeable commercial intercourse between Tibet and its neighbours was the existence of formidable physical barriers. Separating it from the Indian sub-continent in the south and west were the Himalayas and Karakorum. In the north the Kunlum and Altyn Tagh stood between it and Chinese Sinkiang. The Tangla Mountains, which are a continuation of the Karakorum, and the Trans-Himalayan Ranges to the south, contribute to the forbiddingly rugged terrain dividing eastern Tibet from the south-western Chinese province of Szechuan.

From India, Tibet imported cotton goods, precious stones, rice, sugar, tobocco and items of hardware. From China came brick tea—the Tibetan passion for which was to raise British hopes of marketing their own product on a massive scale—silk, satin, brocade and porcelain, enamel and ceremonial scarves (*Khatag*). The Himalayan borderland areas traded largely in local produce.

Tibet's own exports consisted of wool, yak-tails, furs, pasham, borax, salt, medicinal herbs, ponies and mules.

However, as the country's imports far exceeded its exports Tibet's foreign trade was sustained largely by enormous inflows of gold from Mongolia in the form of donations to monasteries and individual lamas,[5] a case where the complementary bonds of religion and commerce served to strengthen each other.

Tibet's principal trade routes were as follows: From Srinagar in Kashmir, via Leh, the capital of Ladakh, through southern Tibet to Shigatse and Lhasa. From Lhasa another route went eastwards to Chamdo where it bifurcated—the

southern road reaching Tachienlu via Batang and Litang ; the northern arriving at the same destination via Kanze and the Dango.

From Lhasa again travellers could strike north across the Chang Tang to Urga (now known as Ulan Bator), the capital of Mongolia, and onwards to Siberia.

Simla provided the terminus for a track which entered Tibet through Shipki and joined the road from Leh. The roads from Almora (also in India), through various Tibetan passes, were significant, too, for the volume of traffic. Two Nepalese-Tibetan routes deserve mention : one passed Kirong Dzong on the upper waters of the Gandak river, the other crossed the frontier near Nya-nam Dzong, on the upper waters of the Arun.

Of greater significance in Anglo-Tibetan relations were the trade routes between India and Tibet which took off from Kalimpong, in the Darjeeling district, crossed south-eastern Sikkim, and entered the Chumbi Valley through the Jelap La. It proceeded thence to Phari where some merchants took the shorter track to Lhasa via the eastern side of the Hram Tso ('Otter Lake'), while others preferred the more circuitous route through Gyantse.

The Assam-Tibet passage from Tawang was considered rather more important as a possible highway of the future between India, Tibet and China.[6]

Because of its low productive capacity, the Tibetan economy, resting principally on barter, had little to sustain it in the way of internal trade. An archaic social system severely restricted the growth of population (according to one good authority the population of Tibet or that part of it under the control of Lhasa was only 3,900,000 in the early part of this century),[7] prevented the proper use of national resources and denied the import or development of superior modes of production. The severe climate and the often formidable barriers of communication within the country, resulting in the isolation of towns and hamlets for much of the year, completes a picture of medieval backwardness. This heightened the importance of Tibet's external trade, more especially as the fortunes and power of

its ruling class depended in large measure on its development.[8] So it also did for the well-being of Tibetan sheep farmers who relied on the successful export of their wool to India, the domestic market being too small to absorb the available supply.[9]

That the limited quantities of currency in circulation were almost exclusively used in external trade was another index of its true significance.

Tibet Between India and China

Situated between Asia's two great cultural centres,

> Tibet has borrowed heavily from both India and China. Buddhism, which pervades the whole life of Tibet, came from India, while the Chinese influence has been particularly strong in political institutions. Although much has been taken from the outside, the very different environment and isolation of Tibet has permitted the preservation of early patterns, as well as the re-working of borrowings into new and sometimes quite original phenomena. The Lamaist Church, although partly the result of Indian influence, is a unique Tibetan creation with an expansive force of its own, which spread as far as Peking and the Volga.
>
> Tibet is an outstanding area for the study of monasticism, theocratic rule, succession by reincarnation, polyandry and group marriage.[10]

In spite of borrowing the Brahmi script from India the real philological affinity of the Tibetan language lies with Burmese, while racially the country's strongest links are with Mongolia. Tibetan Buddhism, derived from the latter and weaker phases of Indian Buddhism, was thus in its lamaistic form,

> A priestly mixture of Shamanastic cult, Tantric mysticism, devilworship, and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, touched here and there by the brighter lights of the teachings of Buddha. As practised in Tibet today, the faith is not merely a monastic brotherhood, it is a truly popular religion, deeply pervading and dominating the life of the Tibetan people.[11]

The Reform of Tibetan Buddhism and the Rise of the Dalai Lama

Tibetan Buddhism experienced its first great reform with the advent of Tsong Kapa, who was born in 1358 in the province

of Amdo in north-eastern Tibet. The new Yellow Hats—so called because of their apparel—as opposed to the old Red Hats were instructed in a stricter code of morals, being forbidden to marry or drink wine.

Tsong Kapa's successor was Ganden Truppa who founded the Tashilunpo monastery, which in the seventeenth century was to become the residence of the Panchen or Tashi Lama, the second great hierarch of the Yellow Church.

> After Ganden Truppa's death in 1474 his spirit was held to have passed into an infant born two years later. The child became his successor, and this system of reincarnation rapidly became popular and spread throughout the country, there are nowadays five hundred to a thousand incarnate Lamas, of greater or lesser merit, distributed over the different sects of the Tibetan priesthood.[12]

The next incarnation, Sonam Gyatso, spread the faith not only in Tibet but also in Mongolia. And it was from a Mongol chief Altan Khan, that he received the title of Dalai Lama Vajradhara, 'the All-Embracing Lama, the Holder of the Thunderbolt'. His successor, Yonten Gyatso, was discovered to be the son of a Mongol prince, which strengthened the hold of the Yellow Church in Mongolia. Since then many Tibetan saints have been reincarnated in Mongol families, thus deepening the religious bond between the two countries.

The fifth in the succession, Lobsang Gyatso, was born of humble parentage a few miles from Lhasa. He has by popular acclaim been regarded as the greatest holder of his country's holiest and most powerful office. With the aid of the Oelot Mongols in 1641, he consolidated the power of the Yellow Sect, thereby confirming the permanence of the Dalai Lama's seat and establishing in the process not only his supreme spiritual status, but also, as well, the highest secular authority which Mongol arms had secured for him. Bell summed up the position thus : 'From the time of his ancestor, Lotus Thunderbolt, he had been a priest. Later, he was recognized as an incarnation of Chen-re-zi, the patron god of Tibet. And now he had become the secular ruler, the king of Tibet. He was priest, god and king.'[13] It was the fifth Dalai Lama who

started building the imposing Potala Palace which was to become the residence of his successors. He also made his old teacher the Grand Lama of Tashilunpo, declaring him to be the incarnation of Amitabha 'The Boundless Light'. In view of the latter's seniority many Tibetans believed the Panchen Lama to have spiritual precedence over the Dalai, though his temporal power was small.

The holders of these high offices were the two most august personalities in Tibet. In wielding authority and influence they generally complemented each other. Occasionally, however, they became jealous rivals, a division which the Chinese were never slow to exploit.

Tibetan Government and Administration

Being a theocracy the Tibetan Government was dualistic in character, with supreme spiritual and secular power vested in the person of the Dalai Lama. But while in theory his power was absolute, it was modified by the existence of consultative bodies. Foremost of these was the *Kashag* or Council of Ministers composed generally of three lay members called *Shapes* and a monk known as *Kalon.*[14] They ran the political and judicial administration of the country holding joint responsibility rather than any special portfolio. They could appoint, transfer or dismiss, subject to the approval of the Dalai Lama (or in his absence the Regent), both lay and monk officials. They were also empowered to issue decrees on land holdings without necessarily having his sanction. The *Kashag* constituted a court of appeal for the laity, and only the Dalai Lama could set aside their ruling.

Below the *Kashag* was another administrative body which was divided into the following departments : Political, Military, Economic, Judicial, Foreign, Financial, and Educational. With the exception of Finance—which was run by four lay officials—these departments were each headed jointly by a layman and monk.[15]

In a theocratic society ecclesiastical affairs assume a special importance of their own. The Lord Chamberlain

(*Chekyab Khempo*) was the link between the Ecclesiastical Department (*Yiktsang*) and the Dalai Lama. He also attended the meetings of the *Kashag* when matters of national importance were to be discussed—a true measure of his influence which sprang from his right of access to the Dalai Lama.

The real balance of power within the body politic was best reflected in the National Assembly or *Tsongdu*, which circumscribed the authority of the civil executive in favour of clerical influence through the strong representation of Tibet's three greatest monsteries, Sera, Drepung and Ganden. While the National Assembly had no legislative role and possessed no formal power over the Executive, neither the Dalai Lama nor the *Kashag* usually overrode its wishes.

The four lay heads of the Department of Finance, and their four monk counterparts of the Ecclesiastical Department, often met in session to discuss matters of political importance and other leading issues of the day. They also presided over the meetings of the National Assembly and hence made their influence felt in the counsels of that body.

No discussion of the Tibetan government would be complete without the mention of the Nechung oracle, which was consulted when the search for a deceased Dalai Lama's incarnation was due to commence, or during a time of national crisis. Like the Delphic priests of ancient Greece those of Nechung wielded considerable power in their country's religious and political hierarchy.

Attention thus far has been concentrated on the central authority in Lhasa. The *Dzongpon* (or Jongpon was the linchpin of the district administration. There were often two holders of the office, one a member of the lay nobility, the other a monk official. In such cases they conducted their business jointly, presiding together, for example, over cases brought before them.

A *Dzongpon* was normally appointed for a period of three years and possessed great powers. He collected revenue (paid mainly in kind) and administered justice ; and the further away he was from Lhasa the greater seemed his local authority. The *Dzongpon*'s functions have been ably summarised as follows :

> His income, out of which he paid his revenue, consisted of dues from the people within his jurisdiction, proceeds of the fines imposed by him, large arrears of revenue he had diverted temporarily or otherwise to his coffers, private trading in which he could compel traders to sell goods to him below market rates ··· He was not obliged to be in his *dzong* or at his post all the time, ... he was required to ... ensure that in his absence members of his family discharged his administrative duties.[16]

One of the privileges of his office was that the peasants were obliged to supply him with free transport called *ula*.[17]

The Class Structure

The Tibetan upper class consisted of two broad sections ; one lay, the other monastic. In view of the pervasive influence of the latter it would as well be to begin with a description of the structure and functions of the monastic aristocracy. This included the monasteries as corporate institutions as well as individual church hierarchs. 'Church hierarchs in their turn are of different types : There are some whose positions are hereditary ; others are found as children to be reincarnations of their antecessors ; still other positions are open to monks of noble or commoner origin alike.'[17]

The monastic orders did not operate independently of the prevalent social values of Tibetan society as a whole. The majority of monks spent much of their time in proving their piety by performing the humbler duties of life for the benefit of their superiors, while those more privileged, dispensed their spiritual favours on lay supplicants or busied themselves with the administration of the country. Indeed, certain monasteries—the Dalai Lama's for instance,—were staffed mainly with men of noble origin. Thus, the broad class divisions of lay society found their corresponding reflection in the church.

It should, however, be noted that what limited social mobility there was within the country was largely confined to the church. And although the avenues for self-advancement offered by this institution were not easy to come by, they were never closed to those who wished to compensate for their lack of social distinc-

tion by their greater individual enterprise. As such, 'Government officials who were recruited from the priests worked much harder'[19] than did the lay aristocrats who, as Bell observed, were inclined to be slack and easy-going in the performance of their official duties.

In relation to the rest of society the poorest monk was better placed socially and financially than his peasant compeer. Not surprisingly recruits for the monasteries were never scarce. To the most needy and deprived they provided a welcome refuge from the unending grind of daily existence.[20] Poor families who supplied monk novices did so in the hope that their boy one day would ascend the ladder of success and that his patronage would then provide ample reward for his relatives.

One social effect of the widespread practice of monastic celibacy was that it depleted the country's scarce human resources, much to the detriment of its agriculture and commerce.

Enjoying a large share of the political administration, benefiting in equal measure from the country's landed wealth, the monks like their lay compeers profited greatly from Tibet's foreign trade. Cocooned behind such privileges, their power was augmented by the sanctity ascribed to them by popular belief. They naturally feared 'that increased facilities for intercourse between their own people and the outside world will eventually result in the decline of their own influence'. The author of these remarks concluded on a more prophetic vein : 'This is no doubt true, but it is impossible for the priesthood to hold up for ever the march of progress in Tibet, and the opening of the country would benefit the masses of the people who now have to support a great number of unproductive priests.'[21]

But in spite of its declining quality, the Church as a whole performed an important historic function. At first, as Owen Lattimore relates, it was the

> instrument of secular kings who used it to circumvent the feudal power of local nobles. Moreover its institutions could be established in every locality and could penetrate both the settled and nomad societies, yet in so doing it did

> not succumb to particularism but retained its corporate centralised interest and character. It successfully eliminated the danger and difficulty of imposing the role of one great family or one locality over other families and localities, for the hierarchical succession to power is relatively impersonal. In the Lama Church, as in the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, the general aim of religious rule is to supersede the feudal method of dividing power between a number of hereditary great families[22].

The lay nobility was the second great prop of Tibetan society. It was drawn from three sources : (a) from an ancestor who acquired the status of a nobleman for meritorious services to the country by being given a place on the Supreme Council ; (b) a descendant of a family in which a Dalai or Panchen Lama took his re-birth ; (c) descendants from Tibet's early monarchs.

Certain members of the nobility resided in Lhasa and appointed stewards to look after their estates. Others were often appointed governors of certain districts by the central government.

Military Organisation

An army is a required arm of any government and Tibet, however unique its society, was no exception to this rule, According to Das the country had a regular force of approximately 6,000 trained men, augmented during war or in an emergency by an irregular force of *Yul-mags* or 'country soldiers'. Of the former 3,000 were kept in constant readiness for service, the remainder being allowed to work on the land at half pay.

Every family or house was obliged to supply one *Yul-mag* when called upon by the government. The *Kah-lons*, *Dzong-pons*, and particularly the *Gerpas* or landholders, furnished quotas of soldiers with weapons, and attendants to carry their provisions, for every kang of land held.

The commander-in-chief of the army was known as *Mag-pon* and selected from a list of six *Dah-pons* or generals, of whom two were posted at Lhasa, two at Shigatse, and one each at Gyantse and Tengri. The *Garpons* of Rudok and Gartok in Western Tibet were akin to military governors.

The Tibetan army, when Das visited the country in the nineteenth century, had no regular uniform, and its principal weapon, a long Chinese matchlock known as the *mendah*, was complemented by bows and arrows and spears. These matchlocks were fired by a coarse kind of powder made from saltpetre and sulphur.

Although the maintenance of such a force constituted no great financial burden

> considering the extent and resources of the country, yet it must be borne in mind, while estimating the military requirements of Tibet, that the government revenue is drained off by the heavy expenditure necessary to support 30,000 idle monks who may be considered as so many undisciplined soldiers. If the great body of monks were trained in the art of war, which Buddhism does not permit, Tibet would have been a power stronger than Nepal.[23]

The wisdom of these remarks was to be revealed time and again down the years.

The Peasantry

The peasant's lot was burdensome ; the blessings conferred by civil rights and social privileges rarely came his way. As soon as a nobleman was granted a tract of land there at once sprang up between him 'and the inhabitants of that particular place a relationship akin to that between sovereign and subject. This lord is an absolute master of his people both in regard to their rights and even to their lives.'[24] Taxes were heavy, debt-slavery common, and the penal code unsparing in its severity for even minor transgressors. Kawaguchi's testimony underlined the types of punishment inflicted. 'Lhasa', he remarked, 'abounds in handless beggars and in beggars minus their eyeballs ; and the proportion of eyeless beggars is larger than that of handless ones.'[25]

The influence of caste acted as a further blight on Tibetan society. Kawaguchi lists four occupations—ferrymen, fishermen, smiths and butchers[26]—as belonging to the category of outcastes with whom intermarriage was regarded as taboo by the rest of society.[27] However, the relative freedom of women provided

a welcome contrast to the darker sides of Tibetan life. Bogle, a careful observer, noted that the fairer sex in Tibet were 'certainly more delicate and joyous than their neighbours……and were treated with greater attention.'[28]

Celibacy has been mentioned previously as a contributory factor to Tibet's low population. Primitive agriculture where wooden ploughs barely scratched the surface of the soil may be regarded as another, while yet a third, and perhaps more obvious cause, was ignorance of public hygiene and medicine. If Phari was dirty, Lhasa, judging from Kawaguchi's description, was not far behind. Medical knowledge was virtually non-existent. Even herbal cures were less in vogue than charms and a wide variety of superstitious remedies. For example,

> in cases of poisoning due to eating bad meat, bad eggs, and from poisoning due to copper pots, pills of various kinds are given, made from the excreta of wolves, mud, rust and other ingredients. [Rheumatism was treated with red hot branding irons and affixing charms or] sometimes a particularly holy lama will spit on the part, and this is considered very effective.'[29]

Only the bracing climate of the country prevented the spread of epidemics and lessened the danger of a higher mortality.

Thus, every facet of Tibetan life, even the speech and deportment of its people, reflected the deep social divisions based on status and privilege. It would nevertheless be an over-simplification to conclude from this that Tibetans generally were buried under gloom and despondency. This was no more true of Tibet than it was of early medieval Europe, for the human spirit often displays a resilience enabling it to transcend material constraints. If the Tibetan Church had declined to a stagnating heap, if religion had degenerated into magic and superstition, there were individuals still, who by their innate goodness uplifted those around them. The Third Panchen Lama, Lozan Pandan Yeshe, who played host to George Bogle was one such person.[30] His successor or re-incarnation in the early years of the twentieth century seems to have been equally impressive. Of him Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, wrote with rapture :

'Wonderful, never-to-be-forgotten Tashi Lama ! Never has any man made so deep and ineffaceable an impression on me. Not as a divinity in human form, but as a man, who in goodness of heart, innocence and purity approaches as near as possible to perfection.'[31] No doubt there were others also ; those that were both learned and kind. But almost all visitors to Tibet have borne witness to the infectious gaiety of its people. A canny Scotsman such as Bogle not easily given to sentimental outpourings was strangely moved at his moment of leavetaking :

> Farewell, ye honest and simple people ! May ye long enjoy that happiness which is denied to more polished nations ; and while they are engaged in the endless pursuits of avarice and ambition, defended by your barren mountains, may ye continue to live in peace and contentment, and know no wants but those of nature.[32]

The Ethnographic Frontiers of Tibet

According to Bell, ethnographic Tibet would approximately cover an area of 700 to 800 thousand square miles and have an estimated population of 4 to 5 million.[33] In the east its extended boundary included a large belt of territory in western China stretching from Yunnan to Kansu, while in the west and south it consisted a trans-Himalayan arc from Ladakh, Lahul, Spiti, Garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam. These Himalayan kingdoms were to play a crucial role in the history of Anglo-Tibetan relations. To old ties of race and religion were added those of commerce, since pilgrims from these regions were often carriers of trade. Their political relations with Lhasa however, were far more ambiguous, being neither as firm nor as close as is sometimes supposed.

In 1683 Tibet-Ladakh relations were settled by treaty and their common border defined a line which approximates to the one dividing India and her neighbour today. Ladakh's independent existence came to an end in 1834 when it was conquered by the Dogras. Absorbed into Jammu and Kashmir it later became part of British India.

Spiti, formerly a province of Ladakh, was eventually absorbed into the Kangra district of Punjab, as was Lahul, whose Tibetan chiefs were once subject to the Hindu kings of Kulu,

Sikkim, founded by central and eastern Tibetan immigrants in the sixteenth century, only loosely acknowledged Lhasa's political authority. As evidence of this, attention may be drawn to developments in the middle of the nineteenth century and subsequently, when Sikkim began steadily losing territory to the British and Tibet did little to help. The same was the case with Bhutan. Indeed, as early as 1730 the Tibetans had sent a costly but abortive military expedition to subdue the Bhutanese. David Macdonald who had a deep knowledge of the peoples of the trans-Himalaya, wrote :

> There is at the best of times very little love lost between the Bhutanese and the Tibetans, the latter fearing the former intensely, especially along the frontiers. There is a proverb in the Chumbi Valley which says that if a Bhutanese draws his sword the whole of the valley trembles. The Bhutanese were inveterate raiders, and in former days, did an immense amount of damage along the Chumbi Valley—Pharijong trade route, as many deserted villages and houses testify.[34]

A contemporary authority, H. E. Richardson, whose knowledge of the area and its peoples is no less great, sums up Tibetan-Bhutanese ties in the following passage :

> The link was another of those loose and variable Central Asian relationships. The Bhutanese respected the Dalai Lama as a great religious figure and honoured him as a powerful neighbouring ruler. But the Gelugpa domination had not extended to Bhutan and there were closer bonds with the Tibetan hierarchs of the older sects. Attempts by Lhasa to impose its jurisdiction on Bhutan by war had been fiercely resisted ; but in a crisis with the non-Tibetan world it was natural for the Bhutanese to turn for help, as they did now [in 1774] to their neighbours and kinsmen in Tibet.[35]

It would be appropriate to conclude with a brief note on one particular area of the Tibetan polity, whose geographic location, social peculiarities and strategic significance gained for it a special place in the history of Anglo-Tibetan relations.

The region alluded to is the Chumbi Valley, that narrow neck of land which divides Sikkim from Bhutan and lies on the southern side of the Himalayan watershed. Through it lay the shortest and most accessible route to Lhasa from the Indo-Tibetan frontier. One third as long, and much less difficult to traverse than those from China, it was frequently used by Chinese officials, who travelled by sea to Calcutta in the first instance and then completed their journey overland through Kalimpong and Sikkim to the Tibetan capital. About its inhabitants Macdonald observed :

> The Tremowa, as the Chumbi Valley people are called, have undoubtedly a strain of Bhutanese and Sikkimese blood in their veins. They are different in appearance and manners from the Tibetans of the plateau, and have a much higher standard of living. Their houses are large and substantial, and they can afford, thanks to the fertility of their soil and their monopoly of the carrying trade, to import more of the luxuries and conveniences of life than their poorer upland brethren.[36]

This distinctiveness of the Chumbi Valley and its inhabitants became a recurring theme in the despatches and communications of leading British frontier officials ; symbolising at once their hopes and fears for the future. They strove to underline the fact that southern Tibet, wherein lay the country's most important towns, including Lhasa the capital, its chief trade routes, and its richest agricultural lands, was in geographical proximity to India. The distance from the Indian frontier to Lhasa, for instance, was no more than 300 miles ; hence their cherished belief that this area of Tibet in particular, lay within the commercial orbit of India. Together with the overall strategic value of the Tibetan plateau as a buffer it made their interest in the politics of Lhasa, at least in their own eyes, a matter of legitimate concern.

The Severance of Indo-Tibetan Ties

Since Buddhism was the dominating theme of Tibetan life, and as its source lay in India, there had been for centuries past a considerable cultural traffic through the Himalayas.

But with the Muslim conquest of the sub-continent and the desecration of Hindu and Buddhist shrines, this largely ceased and led eventually to an abiding dread of Islam in Lhasa.[87] Later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the Gurkhas of Nepal who emerged as the main threat.

These experiences perhaps explain why Tibet had closed her borders to all but a few Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims by the time the East India Company became the sole ruler of Bengal.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. W. W. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, New York, 1891, pp. 218-219 see also, C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 13
2. *Ibid*, p. 13.
   See also. D. Macdonald, *Land of the Lama*, London, 1929, p. 26.
3. T. Holdich, *Tibet, The Mysterious*, London, 1908, p. 25.
4. P. Landon, *Lhasa*, London, 1905, Vol. I, pp. 128-133.
5. E. Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, Benaras, 1909, p. 456.
6. C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 20.
7. D. Macdonald, *The Land of the Lama*, London, 1929, p. 115.
8. E. Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, Benaras, 1909, p. 457.
9. *Ibid*, p. 457.
10. P. Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, Seattle, 1959, p. 3. For a more detailed account see S. C. Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of the Snow*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 51—101.
11. D. Macdonald, *Tibet*, (Oxford University Pamphlet), London, 1945, p. 19.
12. C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 33.
13. C. A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, p. 34.
14. The institution of the *Lonchens* with authority over the *Kashag* was an administrative innovation of the Thirteenth

Dalai Lama in 1907, the reasons for which are set out in W. D. Shakapba, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, U. S. A., 1967, p. 221.

15. *Ibid*, p. 22.
16. R. Rahul, *The Government and Politics of Tibet*, Delhi, 1969, p. 43.
17. For this and other forms of taxation, see S. C. Das, *Narrative of a Journey to Lhasa in* 1881-82, Appendix entitled Government of Tibet, Calcutta, 1885, p. 15.
18. P. Carrasco, *Land Polity in Tibet*, Seattle, 1959, p. 80.
19. C. A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, p. 154.
20. E. Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, Benaras, 1909, p. 430.
21. D. Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, London, 1932, p. 41.
22. O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, Boston, 1962, pp. 218-219.
23. Das, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
24. E. Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, Benaras, 1909, p. 429.
25. *Ibid*, p. 384.
26. Many smiths and butchers were Ladakhi Mohammedans who resided in Lhasa by right of custom.
27. *Ibid*, p. 440.
28. C. Markham Ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, London, 1876, p. 75. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Markham's *Narratives*.
29. D. Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, London, 1932, pp. 37-38.
30. For an outline of the Panchen's life see S. C. Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*, Calcutta, 1965, Appendix 4, p. 16.
31. S. Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, Volume 1, London, 1908, p. 325.
32. Markham's *Narratives*, London, 1876, p. 177.

33. C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 8.
34. D. Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, London, 1932, p. 9.
35. H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, London, 1962, p. 64.
36. *Op. cit.*, p. 59.
37. C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 260.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century the East India Company, embodying the nascent power of Britain, had firmly established itself as the ruling authority of Bengal, These were troubled times, for with the rapid decline of the Moghul Empire, European and Indian contenders jockeyed for power and privilege in almost every corner of the sub-continent.

It was as well for the Company that at this testing period Warren Hastings (1772—1785) was at the helm of affairs in Calcutta. Long experienced in the ways of the country, able easily to converse in Persian, the Governor General, with his purposeful character and subtlety of intellect was a statesman of a high order. Britain's first essay in Himalayan diplomacy bore the unmistakable stamp of his personality.

It was a local crisis which first prompted Hastings to ponder seriously the Company's relations with Tibet, the Himalayan borderland and China. The friendly ruler of the neighbouring territory of Cooch Behar had made an urgent plea for help against the marauding Bhutanese to which Hastings readily responded and the invaders were duly repulsed. But the larger questions involving territorial security, a general peace, and the promotion of the Company's trading interests in the area remained. The seriousness of these was further underlined by the depredations of the Gurkhas, who periodically emerged from their mountain fastnesses in Nepal to prey on their less warlike neighbours. As a result the lively trans-Himalayan commerce from whose continued development the East India Company stood to gain declined appreciably.

The skirmish with Bhutan gave Hastings the opening for which he was looking. He was aware of the traditional ties of kinship, religion, trade and politics that bound the Himalayan

borderlands to Tibet, an awareness which was sharpened when a letter arrived from the Panchen Lama, delivered by Purangir Gosain,[1] a Hindu pilgrim and trader, asking the British to treat the Bhutanese with generosity and compassion.

Hastings' response was to embark on a diplomatic enterprise whose aims were as follows :

First, to establish direct links with the Panchen Lama, famed for his piety in the Lamaist world, in the hope that the latter's prestige with the Bhutanese would act as a restraining influence on their turbulent activities ; for peace in the region would not only reduce the pressure on the Company's over-stretched financial and military resources, but would also revive their declining profits from trans-Himalayan trade.

Hastings' third reason underscored the wider aspect of British diplomacy. The Governor General, dimly aware of the Panchen Lama's unique influence in Peking (with the Dalai Lama still a minor, a Regent ruled), hoped to persuade the Tibetan hierarch to speak favourably to the Chinese Emperor about the English supercargoes bottled up in Canton and so alleviate their difficulties, He was, in a word, probing Tibet's possible use as a backdoor to China.[2]

These then, were the British motives ; but a great deal more had yet to be known about the peoples of the trans-Himalaya,—their habits, customs, material needs, and also the nature of their ties with China. As such this early venture in Himalayan diplomacy was little more than a reconaissance mission. Its goals were succinctly set out in the Governor General's instructions of 13 May 1774, to George Bogle, a Scottish servant of the Company, appointed to lead his country's first embassy to the Panchen Lama's Court :

> The design of your mission is to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bhutan and Bengal, and you will be guided by your own judgement in using such means of negotiation as may be most likely to affect this purpose.
>
> The following will also be the proper objects of your inquiry —the nature of the road between the borders of Bengal and Lhasa, and of the country lying between Lhasa and

the neighbouring countries, their Government, revenue, and manners.[3]

Bogle's first impressions of Bhutan were favourable. The rugged terrain of the country, its bracing climate, were welcome contrasts to the enervating damp and heat of the Gangetic lowlands. He liked the people ; he noted that their society was characterised by a general absence of caste barriers ; that women were more emancipated, and the men less ingratiating than those from Bengal. 'The more I see of the Bhutanese', he remarked, 'the more I am pleased with them. The common people are good humoured, downright, and I think, thoroughly trusty. They are the best-built race of men I ever saw ; many of them very handsome, with complexions as fair as the French.'[4] The climax of the young Scotsman's journey was, however, his long stay with the Panchen Lama, From their first meeting, when they conversed in Hindustani, the Tibetan pontiff and his guest struck an instant accord, which in time ripened into a strange and moving friendship.

As an exploratory venture Bogle's mission must be counted a success. He had won the trust and the confidence of the Panchen Lama who promised to use his influence in Peking on behalf of the British supercargoes. Further, the Tibetan priest, for his part, was interested in reviving his country's almost forgotten religious and culturel ties with Bengal, and the Company naturally promised to facilitate the travel and stay of Tibetan pilgrims wishing to visit holy places, hoping thereby that the goodwill generated would in time lead to more promising avenues of trade. Bogle succeeded in gaining valuable firsthand knowledge of Tibet and its people. He had observed how the Chinese presence was largely confined to Lhasa.[5] He had discussed with the Panchen Lama the problem of maintaining future contact and was in turn apprised of possible Chinese objections. The Lama suggested that relations between the two sides could prosper if the Company made greater use of the services of Hindu pilgrims like Purangir Gosain and relied less on those of European emissaries.

Although Bogle's final report underlined the promising

prospects for future Anglo-Tibetan trade, his mission heralded no new chapter in either political or commercial relations, for both men and circumstances changed with dramatic suddenness. The Panchen Lama of whom much was expected died of small-pox while on a visit to Peking in 1779 ; Bogle himself followed to an early grave, a victim of cholera ; and Warren Hastings, the man who orchestrated the operation was soon to vacate office and leave for England. Following his departure a fresh wave of Gurkha aggression in southern Tibet in 1788-91 took place, provoking in turn, a powerful Chinese military response : the intruders from Nepal were repulsed and Peking's authority in the Trans-Himalaya emphatically re-affirmed. British travellers were no longer welcome, But the entwining demands of trade, frontier security, and a need to cultivate the Chinese Court for considerations of commerse and politics, continued to provide the diplomatic score for Hastings' successors.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the Company's relations with Nepal (Treaty of Segowlee, 1816), Sikkim (Treaty of Titalia, 1817) and Bhutan (the Pemberton mission and its aftermath, 1838-41) resulted in a significant expansion of both its territorial dominion and political influence.

From Nepal the British gained Garhwal and Kumaon ; from Bhutan, the Dooars (or gateways to the plains of Assam and Bengal) ; from Sikkim in 1835, the district of Dorjeling. Dorjeling or Darjeeling as it came to be popularly known, was more than just a sanitorium for Europeans or guard post against possible Gurkha expansionism. The wider significance of its acquisition has been well described by Alastair Lamb :

> The cession of Darjeeling was an event of the greatest importance in the history of the northern frontier of India. Not only did it place the British in close contact with the hill states, their peoples and their politics, but it also provided a constant reminder of the possibilities of trade with Tibet. Many Englishmen--Bengal Government officials, soldiers, and influential merchants—came to pass the hot season in Darjeeling and thereby became aware of Tibet and the Tibetans. From the outset the hill station became a centre for Tibetan studies, and has remained such to the present day. Moreover, Darjeeling seemed parti-

cularly vulnerable to attack by the hill peoples ; though such attacks never materialized there were frequent alarms which must have brought home to the English visitors in a very personal way the problems of this section of the Indian frontier. Whatever the policy of the Indian Government might be, from the early days of this hill station there were always English residents who strongly advocated the establishment of closer relations with Tibet. Some of them enjoyed a reputation far beyond the boundaries of Bengal, and it would be hard to overestimate the part played by the residents of this town in the opening of Tibet.[6]

Kashmir, Ladakh and Central Asia

From about the 1820s, there gradually emerged a northward thrust in the pattern of British power, for the focus of political interest in India had shifted to the Punjab and beyond ; this being well reflected in the travels and writings of William Moorcroft. With the death of Ranjit Singh, with whom the Company had succeeded in maintaining a peaceful but not always easy relationship, Anglo-Sikh relations fell upon difficult times. In the two wars that followed, the last independent Power of the sub-continent was finally absorbed into Britain's expanding Indian Empire. However, the first encounter ending with the Treaty of Lahore (1846) brought in a rich haul of territory, with Jammu, Kashmir, Kashmir, Ladakh, Lahul and Spiti passing under the direct or indirect control of the British[7].

Commercially, the British aspired to profit from the lucrative wool trade botween western Tibet and northern India which sustained the shawl industries of Kashmir and the Punjab. For their part the Tibetans of the area regarded this trade as vital to their well-being, whereas those of Lhasa and Shigatse had never viewed their commercial links with Bengal in the same light. But despite considerable effort the expected contacts with Tibetan officialdom failed to materialise while the profits from the wool and shawl trade proved equally disappointing. The Kashmir Durbar's monopoly of Tibetan wool meant that its shawl industry, assured of a constant supply of the best grade in the market, held an immense advantage over its rivals in the Punjab who had to make do with an inferior brand from

Kerman and Seistan. What is more, the Punjabi weaver was never certain of his supplies of raw wool. To remedy this the British made a tariff agreement with the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1864 and in 1867 Dr. Cayley was appointed the first British Agent in Ladakh. These developments, however, failed to stem the declining British interest in the commercial prospects of Western Tibet. They turned their attention to what they considered to be the more promising pastures of Central Asia by way of Yarkhand and Kashgar, the best route to which from India, passed through Kashmir. The high water mark of this awakened interest was the Forsyth Mission to Yarkhand in 1870.

Tibet and China

The increased British preoccupation in Central Asia brought into focus two important elements in contemporary Asian politics, namely, the growing intensity of Anglo-Russian rivalry, and the vicissitudes of China's political and military strength. It would thus be appropriate at this point to examine the interaction of these influences as part of the wider context of Anglo-Tibetan relations. Of these, ties between Lhasa and Peking had an immediate and direct relevance because of the official view that Tibet was part of the Chinese Empire.

The Chinese relationship with Tibet is the subject of fierce controversy. Suffice it to say that scholars are generally agreed that from the seventh to the ninth centuries A. D. Tibet was a remarkarly powerful country whose military feats were felt in China, India, and in extensive areas of Central Asia. Even during the ascendancy of the famous Tang dynasty, Tibet treated with China on equal terms. As proof of this, H. E. Richardson cites the stone pillar inscription of 821 A. D. at Lhasa[8] ; and even an acknowledged partisan of China such as T. T. Li desists from making any claims of Tibetan vassalage to Peking during this period.[9] The decline of the Tangs in China was paralleled by the slow retreat of Tibetan power to the Himalayan ranges from behind which it was never again to emerge.

A more significant relationship between Tibet and China emerged in the thirteenth century with the incorporation of both nations into the expanding Mongol Empire. The links between China's Mongol dynasty and Tibet had a pronounced religious character and,

> is an example of the purely Central Asian concept of Patron and Priest in which the temporal support of the lay power is given in return for the spiritual support of the religious power. That had been the formal description of the bond between the Mongol Emperors of China and their Lama Vice-regents for Tibet. It is an elastic and flexible idea and not to be rendered in the cut-and-dried terms of modern western politics. There is no precise definition of the supremacy of one or the subordination of the other ; and the practical meaning of the relationship can only be interpreted in the light of the facts of the moment.[10]

In view of the modern Chinese claims to overlordship over Tibet, these remarks are worthy of special note ; more so as their validity is, significantly enough, also accepted by T. T. Li.[11]

With the fall of the Mongol dynasty in China in the fourteenth century, Chinese-Tibetan relations faded from view ; their revival two hundred years later was one again due to the Mongols. For while the Manchus, a tribe from Manchuria, were busy conquering China, the Mongol chieftain, Gusri Khan, defeated the King of Tibet and set up the Dalai Lama—the same who is referred to as the Great Fifth in Tibetan annals—as his country's religious sovereign. The Fifth Dalai Lama extended his spiritual influence beyond Tibet to Mongolia, where he was particularly concerned with saving the Oosot and Khalka tribes from the aggression of the Dzungars. The ambitions of the latter were threatening to create in Central Asia a rival to the new Manchu dynasty in China, a development which it was Peking's intention to thwart. The struggle to defeat the Mongols became, therefore, a dominating theme in China's Central Asian policy from 1690—1758 ; and both Tibetan Pontiff and Manchu Emperor shared a common goal.

After the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the Regent, Songye Gyatso, reversed Lhasa's previous policy by intriguing with

the Dzungars. The Dzungars hoped, no doubt, to get the Tibetan Church on their side and so unite the disparate Mongal tribes into a powerful political and military force. The possibility of such a coalition was regarded with great apprehension by the Imperial Court at Peking. The troubled state of Tibet itself, the conflict between different factions concerning the true identity of the new Dalai Lama gave the Manchu Emperor, K'ang Hsi (1662—1722) an opportunity of interfering in the internal affairs of the country. He extended Chinese power and influence by a skilful blend of subtle diplomacy and military force. A Central Asian himself, K'ang Hsi possessed an exceptional understanding of the minds of his Central Asian neighbours, and exploited the given circumstances to the best possible advantage.

The Dzungars who in the early years of the eighteenth century invaded Tibet under the guise of friendship, soon revealed their true colours and provoked a strong, popular resistance led by a Tibetan aristocrat called Po-lha-nas. The invaders were eventually expelled with the help of a Chinese army ; but the newly installed Dalai Lama, though treated with punctilious deference by China on account of his spiritual authority, was given no political power, and it was Po-lha-nas who ruled the country. To Professor L. Petech, whose book is a standard work on the subject,[12] these events confirmed the establishment of a Chinese protectorate. The ultimate source of Po-lha-nas's authority was Chinese military power in the shape of a strong garrison situated in Lhasa. Peking also invested him with title of 'king' (Chung wang in Chinese)[13]. Nevertheless, he was an extremely capable ruler and maintained a stable and just peace within the country. His death in 1747 brought to the fore his elder son Gyurme Namgyal who proved himself unworthy of high office and so stirred the Dalai Lama into taking a more active political role. The Chinese once again intervened ; their reforms of 1750 abolished the hereditary secular kingship and restored to the Seventh Dalai Lama the powers exercised by his predecessor, the Great Fifth. The temporal supremacy of the religious hierarchy the body politic

assumed a permanence that was never afterwards threatened. Two Chinese Ambans or Imperial Residents were appointed to supervise the general running of the Tibetan government, and, for a period, even had a hand in selecting a new Dalai Lama (a list of names of the possible candidates being placed in an urn on bits of paper, the Amban lifted one with the aid of chopsticks). With time these Ambans grew less efficient, for Tibet to them was an exile from more rewarding pastures in China, and their control over the Regents soon declined (only the Eighth Dalai Lama from the death of the Seventh to the accession of the Thirteenth—a period of 120 years—attained his majority, power being vested in a Regency). Chinese authority symbolised by a garrison and two Imperial Residents rarely came to be seen outside the precincts of Lhasa.[14]

In sum, China's attitude to Tibet from seventeenth century to the twentieth was conditioned largely by the wider aims of its Central Asian policy. The early Manchus having succeeded in winning over Inner Mongolia were able to set up an inner Frontier system that included southern and western Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and the Chinese-speaking Moslem provinces of Ninghsia and Kansu.

> To this was added under the greatest of Manchu emperors, K'ang Hsi (1662—1722), an 'outer' Frontier or trans-Frontier of tribes and peoples who were under control but not under direct rule, in Northern Manchuria, Outer and Western Mongolia, the territory of the pre-dominantly Turkish-speaking Moslems of Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. The Manchu position in these outer territories was not based on direct conquest. It was achieved by a policy of waiting for the Western Mongols to exhaust themselves in a series of attempts, beginning before the Manchu invasion of China in the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, to create a new empire pivoted on the Altai region and the steppes of Northern Chinese Turkestan and extending westward into Tibet and eastward across Outer Mongolia.[15]

By supporting the Mongol church as a counterweight to the authority of the princes the Manchus, in the words of Professor Lattimore, created 'a permanent dyarchy in Mongol affairs, with a church that looked toward Tibet (whose pontiffs were

granted Manchu patronage) and princes that looked directly to Peking.'[16]

Britain and China

When in the eighteenth century the British first sought to open diplomatic and commercial relations with the Imperial Court at Peking China stood high in Europe's estimation. 'An Example and Model even for Christians',[17] was the general verdict of the Jesuits who had visited the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among its leading admirers Chinese civilisation could count such hallowed figures as Leibniz, Voltaire and Spinoza. The idealised image of a benevolent despotism run by philosophers seemed an uplifting spectacle to a continent torn by religious and civil strife.

The British in India were at first inclined to share the views of their compeers in Europe. The glitter and magnificence of the Imperial Court, the reputation of its military power, its immense commercial market—these were the major considerations that influenced them in their cautious Himalayan policy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but when the two took to arms the once imposing Chinese giant was easily vanquished. Only China's potential as a market remained attractive, for even the scholar-officials so admired in the past stood condemned by time. 'The bureaucracy of China,' remarks a distinguished historian,

> had for ages received and absorbed, by an education as arduous as that of Plato's Guardians, the finest talents of the Empire. Those who emerged from its long series of tests, the *Cursus honorum* of China, were men changed for life, transformed into pale and spectacled pedants. The reverence in which they were held by a whole, mainly illiterate population, would be incredible, were it not that the scholar in China had no rivalry to fear from the soldier, the artist, or the priest. He himself was all three···Verses were often read because they came from the pen of a Governor with patronage to bestow ; as elsewhere poetry unaided stuffed no purses. Nonetheless the fusion of political with literary emulation helped to deepen and spread the culture of the Middle Kingdom into an all-pervading influence. At the same time it promoted stability, by grinding all politicians

into the same chastened shape. There were no local magnates, no erratic demagogues, jostling their way aboard the sober Junk of State ; a vessel in any case so barnacled with vested interests that it would do nothing but stand still.

The entire bureaucratic structure rose with a graceful, ornate, pagoda-like symmetry, from the district Magistrate to the metropolitan Boards. Its whole constitution was an equilibrium, designed by checks and balances not to interfere with the myriad shuttles that wove from age to age the same patterns in the complex texture of China's life. It seemed to have solved the problem of perpetual motion—the ticking of an invariable pendulum. Precautions against irregularity were strong. The laborious education of the officials instilled into them a sense of membership in an eternal, divinely constituted hierarchy, whose head was sacrosanct. ..... Before any ambitious Governor's schemes could get under way he could be deposed and finished by a Decree—for the Emperor's power, within strict limits, functioned with a perfection that produced illusions of strength, from which foreigners were slow in clearing their eyes. Magistrates were not feudal magnates with local loyalties to call on, but strangers from another province, without influence except as deputies of the Son of Heaven. Being civil servents and not territorial nobles, they rose to high position gradually and were as a rule old by the time they 'arrived'.[18]

Curzon was just as scathing of the mandarin, 'Educated upon a system which has not varied for ages, stuffed with impracticable precepts, discharging the ceremonial duties of his office with a mechanical and servile accuracy...but arrogant with a pride beyond human conception...'[19]

Yet as early as 1793 Lord Macartney who had led a mission to China in a vain endeavour to establish diplomatic relations with the Manchu Court saw through the panoply of Celestial power. His journal, full of shrewd observations, likened China to a ship : 'She may perhaps not sink overnight ; she may drift some time as a wreck, and will then be dashed to pieces on the shore ; but she can never be rebuilt on the old bottom'[20]. Again, 'the volume of the empire is now grown too ponderous and disproportionate to be easily grasped by a single hand, be it ever so capacious and strong'.[21]

Macartney failed in his efforts to obtain better conditions for English trade; and in its historical setting this failure seemed inevitable, for the Chinese *weltanschauung* could only be understood against the age-old canvas of the tributary system, nurtured on hoary assumptions of China's cultural superiority over 'barbarians': the concept of equality among nations was thus a wholly strange and alien experience.

The commercial benefits of the tributary system--ably explained by Fairbank[22]—were sublimated through court ritual into a mystique of imperial statecraft. China was the centre of the world and 'barbarians' came from afar to pay homage and tribute to the Son of Heaven and bask in the reflected glory of Confucian culture. This bland disdain was crystallised in the Emperor Ch'ien Lung's letter to George III in which the British Monarch was addressed as a barbarian chieftain. Not surprisingly the Pope, together with Holland and Portugal, appear in Manchu chronicles as tributaries of the Celestial Empire. The representatives of these Powers had made the kotow to the Emperor, which indignity Macartney refused to perform, so sealing the fate of his mission.[23] But the real failure lay with the Chinese, for it was their lack of perception concerning the progress of the West; their inability to sense danger in the spectacle of British warships armed with cannon; and their blinkered conservatism which brought them eventual ruin. The truth is that China and Britain were separated by a gulf of centuries; the first, to quote Marx, 'medieval and vegetating in the teeth of time,'[24] the second propelled forward by the greatest scientific and technological revolution in modern history.

However, that said, the export and sale of opium from British India to China under duress was a spectacle, which, even a century later raised the hackles of Sir John Jordan. 'I see,' remarked this famous British Ambassador, 'the Government of India complain that they want to build Delhi, to carry out sanitary and educational reforms. Quite so—the ends justifies the means···If Lord Hardinge could see the Chinese point of view, he might think differently. The Chinese newspapers

know very well that Delhi is being built out of opium and have said things in that connection too disagreeable to repeat'.[25]

Britain and Russia

But if China was one of the external factors influencing Anglo-Tibetan relations, Russia was the other. Russia's expansion across the Asian heartland began in the late seventeenth century, continued through much of the eighteenth and reached its climax in the concluding decades of Queen Victoria's reign. In the farthest east her power extended to the Pacific; elsewhere she pressed southward toward the frontiers of British India. Persia and Afghanistan which guarded the north-western approaches to the Indian sub-continent were the first to feel the weight of her power. Soon the decaying Central Asian Khanates, thinly populated and bereft of social or economic development, were submerged under the advancing tide.[26]

The spectacle aroused grave apprehension among the British who, in the two decades following the Napoleonic War, had been keeping a close watch on Russian activity along the Oxus. The deeds of distinguished Englishmen and their intrepid native assistants have been recounted by H.W.C. Davies[27] and need hardly concern us here.

Of more immediate relevance were the journeys of William Moorcroft, a veterinary surgeon in the Bengal government, who visited Western Tibet in 1812, after which, from 1820-1825, he proceeded to travel through Kashmir, Ladakh, Afghanistan and West Turkestan. Shrewd and observant, he was distrustful of Sikh designs ot a time when the Company's policy was to befriend Ranjit Singh. He was sensitive to the question of Ladakhi trade, particularly in wool, and foresaw correctly the possibility of a Moslem insurrection against China in Eastern Turkestan. Nor was he wrong in forecasting the eventual domination of Ladakh by the Kashmir Durbar. The presence of a Russian agent, Agha Mehdi, alerted him to the dangers on India's northern borders. He also believed that a protectorate over Ladakh would give Britain a foothold at a major point of Central Asian trade, 'with the opportunity of a domina-

ting the whole Central Asian and Chinese market as far as Peking itself. With trade would come political influence and useful military advantages. Ladakh would be an excellent base for operations against China if the need ever arose, and any Russian attempt to invade India could be forestalled from it.'[28] Moorcroft's recommendations were not immediately acted upon as the need to stay in China's good graces was then uppermost in British minds; nevertheless he did succeed in rescuing significant areas of Central Asia from the realms of fantasy and conjecture through keen powers of observation and a strong deductive intelligence.

It was long after Moorcroft had disappeared from the scene that the British began to get really alarmed at the Russians' territorial progress. By 1853 this had reached the line of the Syr Daria, while a separate and earlier move farther east had brought it towards Tashkent. However, there still remained a five hundred mile gap between the last fort on the Syr and the one nearest in the trans-Ili area. In the decade between 1860-70 not only was the gap closed, but Tashkent, and later Samarkhand, succumbed to the might of the Tsarist Empire.

'This advance,' remarks G.J. Alder,

> which came increasingly to dominate Anglo-Indian strategic thinking as the nineteenth century wore on, was probably too rapid and too elemental to be really understood at the time. Public opinion assumed that, since it brought Russia nearer to India, it must have India as its object. In all the talk of invasion, flanking movements, parallels and salients, the fact that the Russian advance was essentially only the acquisition of an Empire tended to be overlooked. But that in itself was serious enough, for Russia had emerged from the Napoleonic Wars as the most powerful nation in continental Europe, and Britain's natural rival. Her rapid approach towards the vulnerable land frontier of the British Indian Empire, an Empire won and maintained by the sea, represented a decisive change in Britain's international position. It was almost an article of belief among the Russian General Staff in the nineteenth century, as it had been with Napoleon, that without command of the sea a military offensive against Britain could only be effectively developed in Asia. No wonder people in Britain were worried. Frightened as they were by Russian invasion schemes, fed with false

> information, deceived by geographical ignorance, and forgetful of the vast distances of mountain, desert and plain in Central Asia, they greeted each Russian advance with almost inevitable bursts of alarm and Russophobia.[29]

The Russian point of view, however, found eloquent expression in Prince Gortchakoff's state paper of 9 or 21 (according to the New Calendar) November 1864, one of the most significant diplomatic documents of the time. Not only did it spell out the specific aims of Russian policy in Central Asia, it provided a historical perspective—the affirmation of a civilising mission—that found ready acceptance among the other powers of Europe, friend and foe alike.

The pith and substance of this remarkable circular was as follows :

> The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised States which are brought into contact with half-savage, nomad populations, possessing no fixed social organisation. In such cases it always happens that the more civilised State is forced, in the interest of the security of its frontier and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character makes most undesirable neighbours.

Punitive expeditions were only a temporary expedient as their lessons were quickly forgotten by the natives and the work of pacification had to begin all over again for,

> It is a peculiarity of Asiatics to respect nothing but visible and palpable force ; the moral force of reason and of the interests of civilisation has as yet no hold upon them... In order to put a stop to this state of permanent disorder, fortified forts are established in the midst of hostile tribes, and an influence is brought to bear upon them by degrees to a state of more or less forced submission. However, beyond this belt of pacified territory there are other tribes and thus the inexorable advance continues. In such manner did the United States in the American continent, France in Algeria, Britain in India, expand their power and authority. No agent has been found more apt for the progress of civilisation than commercial relations. Their development requires everywhere order and stability, but in Asia it demands a complete transformation of the habits of the people. The first thing to be taught to the population of Asia is that they will gain more in favouring and protecting

> the caravan trade than in robbing them. These elementary ideas can only be accepted by the public where one exists; that is to say, where there is some organised form of society, and a Government to direct and represent it...The Imperial Cabinet, in assuming this task, takes as its guide the interests of Russia. But it believes at the same time it is promoting the interests of humanity and civilisation. It has a right to expect that the line of conduct it pursues, and the principles which guide it, will meet with a just and candid appreciation.[30]

It was not the civilising mission of Russia that was anathema to the British; it was the swell of Russian power which caused them most concern. Russia was not merely a potential military threat; her control and closure of vital Central Asian markets to foreign goods was also a bane to British trade and commerce.

Having absorbed the choicest morsels of Western Turkestan, Russia, from 1860, sought to gain command of the old east-west route connecting Eastern Turkestan to the Caspian. Eastern Turkestan may have belonged to China but the Russian aim was to win exclusive control over Kashgar, the capital, and its surrounds. The Indian Viceroy Lord Mayo tried to counter these designs by promoting British commerce in the area. But his efforts in the long run were doomed to failure. Russia, with overwhelming advantages of cheaper and better transport and geographical proximity to China, could bring enormous pressure to bear on Peking in order to extract commercial concessions for her own goods.

Britain, China and Russia

It is at this point that the relations between Britain, China and Russia intersect. The British who made their bid for a slice of the Central Asian trade had concentrated their efforts in Chinese Turkestan. Here, a Moslem adventurer, Yakub Beg, by name, had succeeded in setting up his own standard. As his was one among many rebellions in China at the time; with the country already seriously weakened by the thirteen year-old Taiping uprising, the British in India bargained that Yakub had come to stay; that Peking in its enfeebled state would be

unable to bring this Turki rebel to heel. Against the inclinations of the Foreign Office in London and of Sir Thomas Wade, the British Ambassador at Peking, Anglo-Indian officials were bent on treating with Yakub Beg as an independent ruler in an endeavour to bring his kingdom within the commercial orbit of the British Empire. By so doing they would also be keeping Russia away from India's frontiers and were therefore determined to keep the strategic city of Kashgar from falling into Russian hands. For with Kashgar under their control the Russians, it was feared, would contemplate a flanking advance on India farther west.

The cautious British optimism concerning the prospects of the Eastern Turkestan market had much to commend it. The fertility of its irrigated tracts, the comfortable condition of the people and the degree of civilisation they had attained, the lack of manufacturers, the obvious openings for machinery, the natural wealth of the country, and the apparent stability of Yakub's rule were sufficient grounds to expect a thriving commerce. At worst with Yakub in the saddle the British could expect an even share of the market with the Russians ; with the Chinese back their position would become hopeless.[31]

Much to the chagrin of India, the Chinese in a vigorous military campaign conducted by Tso Tsung t'ang, defeated Yakub Beg in 1877, so ending his dream of an independent kingdom. They then discovered to their intense surprise that the Anglo-Indian officials had concluded a full treaty with the Turki pretender. It was a lesson China was never to forget. The significance of this became manifestly clear during the future course of Anglo-Chinese relations, particularly when they involved Tibet or Sinkiang (the name given to Chinese Turkestan after its pacification).

Sir Thomas Wade, too, was astonished to discover this independent relationship between British India and Yakub Beg. There was an undercurrent of conflict between the Foreign Office, whose policy it was to support and befriend the Manchus, and the Government of India which sought to defend or promote specific Indian interests against Chinese pretensions ; a foretaste

of the divisions that were to cloud their relations on such matters as Burma, Tibet, Sikkim, Yunnan and Hunza during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

China's recovery resulted in a strengthening of the Foreign Office view. With Russian pressure continuing, Britain needed an ally in the East. The calculation was that China, if not an ally, would at least act as a bulwark against Tsarist expansionism. Amid the signs of general decay this surprising triumph of Chinese arms won her new respect. And when to this military victory she added a diplomatic coup through the Treaty of St. Petersburg in 1881,[32] wherein Russia was forced to disgorge the Ili district, her stock rose even higher. D. C. Boulger, a well known writer on Asian questions, and a barometer of informed opinion in London, eulogised China's traditional virtues : he had little doubt that within ten years she would be playing a far from negligible role in the politics of Asia ; he was also certain that while no hostile divergence of interest divided Britain and China on the Asiatic continent, a conflict between the Russians and the Chinese was inevitable.[33] Another writer went further. 'It has,' he remarked,

> often occurred to me that the true solution of the Eastern Question—at least as far as Russian aggression in Asia is concerned—will some day be found in a close Anglo-Chinese alliance..... Combined British and Chinese action would effectively paralyze the hand of Russia in Asia, if not elsewhere.
>
> It will be well for this country if British statesmen will consider how they may best strengthen the friendship between the two mighty Empires. Let them do everything in their power to weld them inseparably together by means of the two bonds which ought, of all others, to bind them in indissoluble alliance—the bonds of similar interests and mutual preservation.[34]

The Chinese were not, however, inclined to reciprocate these expressions of British cordiality. It is unlikely that their experience with Britain over the opium trade would be so soon forgotten. Nor would the episode of British involvement with Yakub Beg. More difficult to erase was the tradi-

tional Chinese world-view according to which the Middle Kingdom stood supreme in its attainments, and for the radiance of whose civilisation 'barbarians' craved. There were periods, it is true, when 'barbarians' had gained temporary control or superiority over China, yet had failed to shake the immutability of Confusion tradition. Further, in times of weakness, it had been a time-honoured ploy to play off one 'barbarian' against another ; but an alliance or equal partnership with a foreign power was totally at odds with the Chinese ethos. As between Russia and Britain, the latter could at best be regarded as the lesser evil, no more. For if China's resistance to the far greater territorial demands of Russia was firm—at least in intention if not in performance—her response to more modest British demands on Tibet was no less unyielding. The immediate concern of China's rulers was to strengthen the ramparts of the Empire ; in Tso Tsung t'ang's words, 'to pay close attention to Sinkiang is to protect Mongolia, and to protect Mongolia is to shield Peking...Russian has been expanding her territory continually and her territory borders ours from the west to the east for more than ten thousand li. The two nations are separated only by Mongolia, and we must take preventive measures lest we lose Mongolia.'[35] Already a Mongol tribe known as the Buriats had passed into the Tsarist Empire. Like their fellow Mongols elsewhere, they, too, were Lamaists standing in deep veneration of the Dalai Lama. As agents they could further the cause of Russia. An old theme of Central Asian politics began to reappear : to command the favours of Tibet's religious hierarchy in the quest for political power.

Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet after 1861

With Western Tibet failing to provide the expected commercial or political results, Sikkim and Bhutan, one again became the focus of British attention. These intervening years had been a period of seed-time in Anglo-Sikkimese relations. The former's involvement in the domestic politics of this little Himalayan kingdom remained, and continuing irritation with a difficult

ruler finally resulted in a military demarche in 1861 which reduced Sikkim to a British protectorate in all but name.

Four years later, in 1865, Bhutan was punished for its continuing raids into the Bengal and Assam Dooars ; but apart from annexing the Dooars, the Treaty of Sinchula left the country to its own devices ; an annual British subsidy of Rs. 50,000 was promised in return for good behaviour. Having twice tangled with these hardy hillmen the British were reluctant to do so again, while Bhutan having experienced the power of the Raj was content, henceforward, to keep the peace and extract every possible advantage from maintaining a pacific posture. It would, however, be wrong to circumscribe Anglo-Bhutan relations to the perennial cycle of frontier raid and military riposte, for here too were present the same commercial considerations that informed British policy elsewhere in the Himalayas. The *Calcutta Review* observed that the Dooars contained 'the same soils which are so well adapted for the production of the tea and coffee plant, and in no part of Bengal are the conditions so favourable for the development of these speculations.'[36] Also, the proximity of Chota Nagpur meant that the best labour market in the province was within easy reach.

More important, however, was the greater prize of Tibet in which the Government's interest was kept alive by pamphleteers, travellers, chambers of commerce and other such bodies. On 25 April 1873, for instance, a deputation from the Royal Society of Arts consisting of such Himalayan experts as Dr. Campbell, T. T. Cooper[37], Dr. Joseph Hooker[38], and B. H. Hodgson[39], called on the Secretary of State for India, the Duke of Argyll, and pressed him to adopt an active Tibetan policy on commercial and strategic grounds. They drew his attention to the establishment of a Russian mart at Kiachta, situated on the border of Siberia and Turkestan ; they argued that trade through Sikkim should be organised on a regular basis, and that the Government should aim for a British mission either at Lhasa or Shigatse.

The indefatigable Boulger expressed the view that if India could exchange her tea for Tibetan wool it would revolutionise

her balance of trade and strengthen her finances.[40] The Reverend Graham Sandberg, an old resident of Darjeeling and a well-known Tibetologist was no less optimistic :

> England will find, moreover, that the Tibetans are a very different race to manage than the Afghans. We believe they are peace-loving, and their confidence could easily be won. The development of the natural resources of the country—rich as it is in gold, and wool and borax—under British auspices and assistance would forge a clasp to the bond in the shape of self-interest.[41]

All were agreed that Tibet should be opened to British trade. The question was how ? The Indian view was that Tibet would on the whole welcome closer relations and admit British visitors if only Chinese objections could be overcome. They, therefore, favoured a direct approach to Peking to achieve this end.

The British Approach to China

British diplomats in China, and the Foreign Office in London to whom they sent their reports, saw the matter differently. In their view the Chinese Government would never willingly agree to a British visit to Tibet, firstly, because they had no wish to see their precarious influence undermined further ; and secondly, because there was no guarantee that even if they did, the Tibetans would honour any Chinese undertaking. But there was no let-up in Indian pressure, thanks to which a separate article was attached to the Chefoo Convention of 1876 between Britain and China wherein the Chinese Government accepted in principle the right of a British mission to visit Lhasa. The projected mission under Colman Macaulay, Secretary to the Bengal Government, seemed to climax the hopes and aspirations of a whole generation of Anglo-Indian officials. Two distinguished Tibetologists, Sarat Chandra Das and Ugyen Gyatso were to grace the party by their presence ; and the excitement was rising to fever pitch when the bubble burst. The Chinese offered to recognise British control over Burma – a matter of dispute hitherto—in exchange for which they insisted that the mission to Tibet be dropped. As Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy,

had never been an enthusiastic supporter of Macaulay's enterprise, he readily accepted the Chinese proposal. The misson which was due to leave at the end of 1885 got no further than Darjeeling before the Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1886 put an end to its Tibetan ambitions.

A tangible bond between Peking and Lhasa was the commercial link through which the Chinese Government guaranteed the Tibetan lamasaries vast quantities of brick tea. To allow British influence into Tibet, with the alarming possibility of Indian tea following in its wake, would serve the interests of neither party : for the Chinese it would mean the loss of their slender leverage within the counsels of government at Lhasa ; for the conservative Tibetan clergy it could signal the end of an all-pervasive spiritual, social and economic power. Lama and mandarin were united in their desire to see Tibet sealed from all contact with British India.

The Exploration of Tibet

Since it had been decreed by its rulers that Tibet was to be a forbidden land, save to groups of privileged pilgrims, its doors had to be prised open by other means. Such was the challenge which this ban evoked ; for it was an age when Europe speculated endlessly about the heartland of Asia from whose depths had poured the myriad armies of great conquerors. But it was not only the spirit of the past that beckoned. The needs of the present called with compelling urgency. The geographical explorer, scientist, archaeologist, and not least, the political agent representing the divergent interests of two expanding empires, were each driven by a common desire to share in its secrets.

The deeds of these remarkable travellers, British, Russian, French, Scandanavian and American have been recounted in numerous memoirs, biographies, travelogues and even general histories. For the most part they explored Central Asia, including a peripheral area of Tibet without ever reaching Lhasa. The sole Englishman to do so in the nineteenth century was Thomas Manning in 1811 ; the only other Europeans being the French

Lazarist missionaries, Fathers Huc and Gabet, who followed some thirty-five years latter.

The exploration of Tibet begun in the decade after 1860 was mainly an Indian achievement, 'the work of obscure travellers whose feats were among the greatest in the history of exploration, the band of "pundits" organised by the Indian Survey Department ;'[42] they were men who with two exceptions were illiterate but whose work called for considerable powers of skill and judgement. Trained to execute delicate traverse surveys involving the measurement of all peaks, forts, and monasteries that were passed, they determined distances by counting every step they took. Latitudes were taken with a sextant and frequent boiling point observations had to be made for altitude readings. However, the accuracy of this survey depended chiefly on their ability to keep a continuous measure of the road—any break would ruin much of the work since they were unable to judge longitude by lunar calculations. The fact that one 'pundit' walked over 2,500 miles of mountain range, counting every step he took ; that another travelled in similar fashion for 2,080 miles, while a third did 1,319 miles, all under conditions of utmost secrecy, gives some indication of the labour and stupendous patience of their undertaking. 'They form,' in the words of Sir Thomas Holdich, '(together with another most useful band who have given us most of what we know of the north-western frontier, and of the hinterland even to the border of Russia) a very remarkable group of Indian employees—a staff of "intelligence" workmen such as probably no other country in the world possesses...Skilful, faithful, persistent, and cheap, there is nowhere that they will not venture, and no physical difficulty of mountain or desert that they will not face'.[43] Their deeds brought from W.W. Rockhill, the noted American Tibetologist, diplomat and traveller the following comment :

> If any British explorer had done one-third of what Nain Singh, Lama Ugyen Gyatso, Sarat Chandra Das, or Kishen Singh (alias A. K.), accomplished, medals, decorations, lucrative offices and professional promotions, freedom of cities and every form of lionizing would have been his...[44]

Of the cerebral Sarat Chandra Das more needs to be said. Highly educated, a scholar of Tibetan and Sanskrit, his journeys to Tibet possess a special significance. His first visit in 1879 to Tashilumpo on behalf of the Indian Survey Department was made with the permission of the Panchen Lama who issued him with a passport. Two years later, in 1881, on the orders of Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, he departed again for Shigatse, accompanied once more by his former companion, Ugyen Gyatso. The Panchen Lama's Minister received the visitors with great cordiality and offered to take them to Lhasa as members of his entourage. When the plan failed to materialise Das went on to Lhasa in disguise, staying in hiding with a friendly monk official. The subsequent discovery of his clandestine trip exacerbated the suspicions of officials in the Tibetan capital and made them even more unaccommodating towards the British. However, the Minister had been curious about the outside world, concerning which he plied his guest with numerous questions, and eventually commissioned him to buy on his behalf a lithographic press, a telephone and a camera. Seizing this opportunity, the Bengal Government sent the articles to Tashilunpo as gifts,[45] but the promise of closer relations was resolutely undermined by conservative forces in Lhasa.

Nonetheless, the results obtained by Das were of permanent value. He had gained important friends within Tibet and succeeded in bringing back to India maunscripts of great historical and cultural worth. Furthermore, in Sandberg's words :

> The mysterious capital of Tibet had been thoroughly explored by a learned and intelligent man, and fully reported upon. Many important places, whose actual positions had been hitherto merely guessed at, were by him fixed mathematically. Yamdok Lake had been re-explored. Finally, a new map of the Central Parts of Tibet—replete with an indefinite number of place-names, newly ascertained and with courses of rivers and mountains accurately traced on paper for the first time—was constructed, based in part upon the information by Babu Sarat Chandra Das.[46]

The Peking correspondent of the London *Times*, in 1885, underlined the continuing importance of such ventures :

> 'In using Asiatics to conciliate Asiatics,' he observed, 'the Government would be following the line of least resistance and might hit upon the true solution of the Tibetan problem. There are Bengali Pandits, not many perhaps, who combine the tolerance of privations and the subtlety of address which are the special characteristic of the Hindu. Their mildness disarms hostility, and when imbued with zeal for their work their quiet resolution and infinite capacity for waiting, overcome every obstacle. With a handful of rupees they appear capable of making stupendous journeys over the eternal snows, surveying the country as they go, and gaining the active goodwill of the inhabitants. Such a force as that is surely an element of incalculable strength to a Government whose external affairs are all Asiatic.'

Anglo-Tibetan Confrontation 1888—1898

The curtain raiser to this most dramatic phase of Anglo-Tibetan relations was the convention signed in Darjeeling on 17 March 1890 between Lord Lansdowne, the Indian Viceroy, and the Chinese Amban, Sheng Tai, which put the final seal on Sikkim's status as a British Protectorate.

It was on event which began with developments in Tibet arising from a new spirit of Tibetan independence. The first symptom of this was the rapid deterioration of relations between Tibet and Nepal in 1883 followed by a difficult period when Lhasa's ties with Bhutan and Sikkim were subject to great stress. Resentful at the news of the projected mission of Colman Macaulay the Tibetan authorities, particularly the clergy, decided that a more assertive policy towards their two small neighbours was called for. The Bhutanese who had raided Phari in 1883 were brought to heel by a joint show of strength by a force of Tibetans and Chinese. The latter as usual sought to exploit the situation by awarding buttons of Chinese rank and other insignia to Bhutanese chiefs in an effort to assert the formal authority of their country. The Maharaja of Sikkim suitably cowed by this display was ordered by Lhasa to bar the entry of Europeans to his country; and as a

measure of its earnestness, a Tibetan force crossed the border in July 1886 with orders to encamp at Lingtu.

The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, was at first inclined to sit out the crisis. His lack of enthusiasm for Macaulay's project has already been noted; a spot of quiet diplomacy in Peking would, he hoped, soon put the matter right. The British Minister asked the Chinese to bring their Tibetan feudatories into line. But as Li Hung Chang admitted to Edward Goschen, China's influence in Tibet was only nominal, the Lamas being the true arbiters of policy. Still, he went through the motions by asking the Amban to persuade the Tibetans to withdraw. They refused.

Meanwhile, both in Britain and in India, pressure for action mounted. Masterly inactivity having failed, Dufferin decided to expel the Tibetan intruders by force. In March 1888 a force of 2,000 under the command of Brigadier-General Graham accomplished this task without undue trouble. 'A few shells from the beautiful little mountain guns settled the whole business in a very few minutes,'[49] observed the *Englishman's Overland Mail* pithily. Certain Bengal officials said that this latest provocation justified an invasion of Tibet itself, but Dufferin was less inclined to be blown off his feet.

The Chinese, desperate to get their shadowy control over Tibet recognized internationally, sent their Amban in December 1888 to negotiate with Mortimer Durand, the Indian Foreign Secretary. While accepting *de facto* British control over Sikkim, the Amban insisted that the Sikkimese ruler continue to pay homage to the Dalai Lama and China; a demand which Durand refused to countenance for, in his view, a concession here would undermine British authority throughout the Himalayas. It might even lead China to assert, some day, her suzerain rights over Darjeeling and the Bhutan Dooars.

The Amban attempted to shift his position but Durand held firm. When the Chinese official hinted that British obduracy could lead to war, he was informed that such a conflict would not be fought in Sikkim but elsewhere—in the theatre where the last war was decided. He 'shut up like a telescope, with profuse

apologies for his "joke".' 'I don't think,' continued Durand. 'he will try frightening me again. But it is hopeless work dealing with a Chinaman unless you can put a pistol to his head. He lies and evades, and changes the conversation in the most amusing but effective way.'[48] In an adroit manoeuvre the Amban then attempted to order the Bhutanese Deb Raja to present himself but his attempt to 'assert openly in our presence the influence of China over Bhutan'[49] was thwarted. In view of China's lack of political or military strength, her representative was playing from a weak hand. Durand explained : 'The Amban evidently does not give way about the "rights" of Tibet.' 'He was,' he said, 'only a guest at Lhasa—not a master—and he could not put aside the real masters. He has no force to speak of, and he knows the Tibetans have turned upon a Chinese Resident before now...'[50] As the Chinese official stubbornly stood his ground Durand called off the negotiations, and advocated immediate British occupation of the Chumbi Valley, both as a lever against the Tibetans and as recompense for the costs of the recent war. The consequences of such action, according to the Indian Foreign Secretary, was that 'we should put an end once and for all to our troubles with Tibet, and to our exclusion from that country, which would then be opened to our trade. We should entirely break the influence of the Tibetans, not only in Sikkim, but also in Bhutan : and we should greatly raise our reputation in the Himalayan States.'[51]

A second round of talks was vigorously opposed by Durand and Lord Lansdowne, the new Viceroy, was also sceptical about its usefulness. He was against negotiations being conducted in Peking, where he felt Indian interests might be sacrificed due to an inadequate knowledge of the problem by British diplomats ; furthermore, to refer a local dispute to Peking would lower the authority of the Government of India in the Himalayas.[52]

For the Foreign Office the overriding need was to placate China as a possible bulwark against Russia, the wisdom of which Lansdowne acknowledged. 'We must,' he remarked to

the Secretary of State for India, Lord Cross, '...deal with the Chinese as tenderly as we can, in order to remain on good terms with them in other parts of this continent.'[53] Thus, he stayed Durand's hand when the Indian Foreign Secretary was in favour of asserting British rights on the Sikkim frontier without bringing in China. In view of the odium Curzon was later to incur, it is interesting to note Salisbury's observation that no final settlement would be possible unless the peace terms were dictated at Lhasa.[54] But he was for the moment prepared to shelve his views in the larger interests of Anglo-Chinese relations.

With the Indian Government adamant, China was fearful that Calcutta would treat separately with Lhasa ; hence she agreed to concede British demands on Sikkim and in return salvaged the implicit British recognition of her suzerain rights in Tibet.

Apart from resolving the status of Sikkim, the Convention of 17 March 1890 achieved little of immediate value. Neither politically nor commercially did it represent a breakthrough in Anglo-Tibetan relations. No official contact between Lhasa and Calcutta was established, while the Trade Regulations of 1893, for which provision had been made in 1890, brought only a meagre gain for the British. The mart at Yatung though located near the Sikkim border was situated in a narrow valley off the main route ; reachable only by a single road which enabled the Tibetan authorities to bar the way for their own traders. It was an unpromising start to regular commercial relations, and, if anything, increased the resentment of the Bengal officials. The Chinese for their part successfully thwarted the proposal to allow Indian tea into Tibet by getting the question deferred for another five years. As tea was both a weapon of political and commercial influence in Tibet, the Chinese fear of admitting a rival product becomes understandable.

However, in retreating before Britain over Sikkim, China's own authority—what little there was—suffered further erosion. One important factor cementing ties between Lhasa and Peking in the past had been the latter's ability as suzerain to provide the

necessary protection against an external threat. This China was clearly unable to provide.

The Tibetans showed their feelings by ignoring the frontier accord with Sikkim, obstructing in every possible way the implementation of the Trade Regulations with Britain on the plea that they were not a party to these agreements. As a result, Anglo-Tibetan relations reached a total impasse. J. C. White, the Political Officer in Sikkim observed the hopelessness of trying to put pressure on the Tibetans through the Chinese. 'The Tibetans,' he wrote, 'will not obey them, and the Chinese are afraid to give orders. China is Suzerain in Tibet in name only.'[55] The British dilemma was best summed up by H. J. S. Cotton, Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government :

> If the British had only to deal with Tibet, there is no doubt that the wisest policy would be to give them warning that unless they at once made arrangements to co-operate in the work of delimitation it would be done without them, and that unless they appointed a ruler on their side who could protect the pillars set up, the British Government would march in and hold the Chumbi Valley in pawn either temporarily or permanently. Such a brusque and high handed line of conduct is the only one that frontier tribes who have reached the civilization of the Tibetans can understand. But the affair is complicated by the relation of the Government with China and our desire to uphold the feeble and tottering authority of the Chinese at Lhasa, the result of which is that people who are in real power are not those whom we deal with, and that the people we deal with have no powers to carry out their engagements with us.[56]

Bengal officials closely associated with Britain's Himalayan interests were naturally in the forefront of those calling for a more vigorous Tibetan policy ; but more interesting was the fact that they were being joined by others whose responsibilities revolved around Chinese Turkestan. The reports of the Trade Agent at Kashgar underlined the steady decline of British Indian Commerce in the area. An obvious solution was to search for new markets. Captain G. Chenevix Trench, the British Agent at Leh, Ladakh, who forwarded these reports added the following observations :

> In view of the future uncertainty of our trade with Chinese Turkestan, and the chance that the 'open door' in that quarter may not always be open as now, it is our duty to look for fresh fields.
>
> In my opinion this is to be found in the direction of Tibet. A commercial invasion of that mystic country, with the rich provinces of Szo Chan and Kansu and Shensi in China as the objective, would I believe, be profitable.
>
> There are already hopeful signs that the peasantry of Tibet are gradually losing their suspicious dislike of the traders from India. Between Ladakh and Tibet trade is busy to the few who are allowed to cross the border, and I am being constantly asked whether the wool trade in carpet manufacture, etc. could not be increased.
>
> Surely there is much to advocate a policy which should carry trade to South China, and I hope this trade report will at any rate be the means of drawing attention to Tibet and its possible use as a trade market.[57]

Commercial interests were not slow to notice Tibet's potential. The Bradford Chamber of Commerce drew the attention of the India Office in London to the possibilities of a thriving wool trade.[58] Other Lobbies pressed the case for Indian tea in which industry a good deal of British capital had been sunk. In view of the subsequent controversy surrounding the activities of the Indian Tea Association, it should be pointed out that no tangible proof exists that the Government had become their willing or captive pawn. The Indian tea industry had grown enormously during the nineteenth century. British entrepreneurs had long sought to break the Chinese monopoly and this they had been able to do most successfully. Chinese tea had been almost totally ousted from the British market by the Indian product. Nor was the trend markedly different elsewhere. Nonetheless, the leaders of the British Indian tea industry were not inclined to rest on their oars. The Indian Tea Association with branches in London and Calcutta did considerable promotion work, and the fact that the Chairman of its first meeting in 1894 was none other than Sir Douglas Forsyth, was proof that it had powerful friends, particularly in governmental circles. The following passage by Percival Griffiths is a fair description of the spirit which animated this organisation :

> The Indian Tea Association at this time was much alive to the need for capturing foreign markets, and in his annual meeting in 1897 the chairman referred to the need to produce tea suited to the Russian taste and so capture that market from China. He also went on to urge the need for a propaganda campaign to oust Japan and China tea from the United States of America and Canada. Above all, he emphasized the need to cheapen costs without sacrificing quality.[59]

Similar motives inspired much of the overblown rhetoric concerning the need to dominate the Tibetan market. The tea industry's failure to breach the Himalayan wall was compensated by substantial gains elsewhere. No hidden capitalist manipulated the Viceroy or his chief advisers into sending Younghusband to Lhasa.

The Consequences of the Sino-Japanese War, 1895

But while these broader developments were unfolding, an event of immense significance had given a new twist to the international situation. From 1 August 1894 China and Japan had been formally at war over Korea. Eight months later on 19 March 1895 when the two parties met at Shimonoseki to arrange the terms of peace, Japan much to the surprise of the world had emerged the clear victor. The island-state which had started on the road to modernization barely thirty years ago had in its first real trial of strength emerged with flying colours. For China the future was bleak. Britain had seen in her a possible ally against Russian expansionism and it was because of this that London had put a brake on India.

As a diplomatic card China had ceased to have much value. The serious diminution of her power exacerbated British suspicions of Russia, since it was Russia that was making the greatest inroads into the Chinese Empire. At such a time the question uppermost in the minds of leading public figures in England was the concept of a Forward policy about whose wisdom a variety of views were aired.[60]

The Gortchakoff Memorandum had laid down certain principles which were basic to the Forward policy of Russia and Britain alike. One of the central factors, dictated mainly by the

needs of local frontier security, was the necessity of permanently pacifying the marauding tribes who lived beyond their borders. An endless succession of punitive expeditions could not only prove expensive ; they offered no permanent solution either, merely a palliative. A truly stable peace had to rest on measures that were not wholly military : a system of settled administration had to be set up and that meant exercising a degree of political control.

For Russia the principles of a Forward policy were learnt in Central Asia ; the turbulent North West Frontier of India was Britain's school.

Lord Roberts defined and justified its use in the speech below :

> The Forward policy—in other words, the policy of endeavouring to extend our influence over, and establish law and order on, that part of the border where anarchy, murder, and robbery, up to the present have reigned supreme—a policy which has been attended with the happiest results in Baluchistan and on the Gilgit Frontier, is necessitated by the incontrovertible fact that a Great European Power is now within striking distance of our possessions, and in immediate contact with a State [Afghanistan] for the integrity of which we have made ourselves responsible.[61]

For the British the implications of a Forward policy at this juncture transcended local requirements, as they involved a need to define the wider strategic problems caused by the expanding empire of their major rival in Asia. As long as China remained firm Russia would pose no direct threat to India's Northern and North-Eastern frontier. But with Peking's weakness exposed with such dramatic suddenness, and with the ensuing scramble for territory and influence in the Chinese Empire, from which Russia appeared to be the biggest gainer, it was felt that Tibet, underpopulated and weak, like so many of the Central Asian Khanates had once been, could either pass directly under Russian influence ; or else that a pliable China would be all too easily manipulated by the Tsar. A frontier of some 2,000 miles stretching from Ladakh to the Assam Himalaya could thus be

exposed to unsettling influences and result in an intolerable strain on Britain's scarce military resources.

The Director of Military Intelligence, Sir John Ardagh, in a Paper entitled 'Military Considerations connected with the Pamir Frontier'[62] called for the extension of India's strategic frontier beyond the highest watersheds to the foot of the glacis formed by the northern slope, along the longitudinal valleys which are to be found on the northern side at a comparatively short distance from the crest—a configuration absent on the adjacent south. Sir John proposed that the British frontier be pushed forward to include certain key passes in case Sinkiang, passed from Chinese to Russian control.

If China's defeat in 1895 resulted in a dramatic fall in her international standing, her reputation stood no higher in Tibet. In that very same year the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attained his majority, thus marking a break in a long line of Regents. The new ruler of Tibet was one of the most remarkable in his country's history ; comparable in political and moral stature to the Great Fifth himself. For the next thirty-eight years he became the driving force behind Tibet's foreign policy. A new spirit of Tibetan independence was abroad. The settlement over Sikkim without reference to Lhasa had increased Tibetan resentment against China and fuelled suspicion and fear of Britain. The dilemma in India was that it became impossible to communicate with Lhasa either through Peking or directly. And so it remained until Curzon decided to cut the gordian knot.

It was during Curzon's Viceroyalty that the underlying problems of Anglo-Tibetan relations assumed menacing proportions. That there was a perceptible increase in tension between the two Powers since the Sikkim crisis of 1886-1890 is undeniable ; but the unresolved problems of a hundred years, such as the regularisation of border trade or the establishment of direct political ties between Lhasa and Calcutta might have lain dormant for yet awhile. It was, however, the threatened disintegration of China and the uncompromising attitude of Russia, that together brought Anglo-Tibetan relations to a boil.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Writing of Hastings' emissaries Bogle and Turner, Cammann states : 'It must be emphasised, however, that with all their capabilities, they would have been almost powerless to accomplish anything without the help, advice and translating ability of the much-neglected Purangir. He was indeed one of the most remarkable men of his time and place, and deserves more recognition.'
   S. Cammann, *Trade Through the Himalayas*, Princeton, 1951, pp. 145-46.
   For more on Purangir, see Gour Das Bysack, 'Notes on the Buddhist Monastery at Bhotbagan', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. LIX (1890), pp. 50-59 ; S. C. Sarkar, 'Some Notes on the Intercourse of Bengal with the Northern Countries in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century,' *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. XLI, 1931, pp. 119-128.
   Ibid, 'A Note on Puran Gir Gossain,' *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. XLII, 1932, pp. 83-87.
2. A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1960, p. 9.
3. Markham's *Narratives*, p. 6.
4. *Ibid*, p. 51.
5. Markham's *Narratives*, p. 195.
6. A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1960, p. 90.
7. The State of Kashmir which included Jammu and Ladakh came under British protection a week after the signing of the Treaty of Lahore. Its ruler, Gulab Singh, formerly a feudatory of the Sikhs, managed to remain neutral during the Anglo-Sikh war, for which the Company rewarded him by handing him back his kingdom, but on condition that he consented to place the conduct of his external relations in British hands and also pay them an annual tribute.
8. H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, London, 1962, p. 30.

9. T. T. Li, *Tibet Today and Yesterday*, New York, 1960, p. 12.
10. H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, London, 1962, p. 47.
11. T. T. Li, *Tibet Today and Yesterday*, New York, 1960, pp. 215-216.
12. L. Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, Leiden, 1950.
13. *Ibid*, p. 163.
14. H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, London, 1962, pp. 70-71.
15. O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, Boston, 1962, p. 87.
16. *Ibid*, p. 89.
17. R. Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon*, London, 1967, pp. 35-64.
18. V. G. Kiernan, *British Diplomacy in China*, Cambridge, 1939, pp. 226-227.
19. G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, London, 1894, p. 367.
20. J. L. Cranmer-Byng, [Ed.] *Journal of Lord Macartney during his embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, 1783-44*, 1962, p. 213.
21. *Ibid*, p. 239.
22. J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng, 'On the Ch'ing Tributary System,' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Cambridge, Mass., Vol. 6, 1941, pp. 135-146. See also Fairbank [Ed.] *The Chinese World Order*, Cambridge, Mass. 1968.
23. H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, London, 1962, p. 37.
24. Dona Torr, [Ed.] *Marx on China*, London, 1968, p. 55,
25. Jordan Papers, F. O. 350/12, Jordan to Langley, 4 May, 1914.
26. For a good survey, see David Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 1828-1914, London, 1977, and Gerald Morgan, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia 1810-1895*, London, 1981. More specialised works are ; R. L. Greaves, *Persia and the*

Defence of India, 1814-92, London, 1959 and Suhash Chakravarty, *From Khyber to Oxus : A Study in Imperial Expansion*, Delhi, 1976. J. H. Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*, Harvard U.S.A. 1950.

27. H. W. C. Davies, *The Great Game in Asia*, Raleigh Lecture on History, London 1926.
Michael Edwardes, *Playing the Great Game*, London, 1975 is written in a popular vein.
For two excellent and highly entertaining studies of British travel and exploration in the Western Himalayas, see John Keay, *When Men and Mountains Meet*, London, 1977 and its companion volume, *The Gilgit Game*, London, 1979.
28. G. J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier*, London, 1962, p. 19.
29. *Ibid*, pp. 2-3.
30. Cited in D. C. Boulger, *England and Russia in Central Asia*, Volume 1, London 1878, p. 318.
31. For British diplomacy in Eastern Turkestan, see G. J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier*, London, 1963, pp. 98-99 ; also C. P. Skrine and Pamela Nightingale, *Macartney at Kashgar*, London, 1973.
32. Immanuel Hsu, *The Ili Crisis*, London, 1965, p. 188.
33. D. C. Boulger, *Central Asian Questions*, London, 1885, p. 300.
34. W. B. Dunlop, 'The March of the Mongol', *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, London, Volume 7, 1889, p. 41.
35. Cited in Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840—1928*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1956, p. 112.
36. 'The Bhootan Dooars', *The Calcutta Review*, Calcutta, Volume 48, 1868, p. 111.
37. See T. T. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce*, London, 1871 ; also *The Mishmi Hills*, London, 1873.
38. J. Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, (2 Vols), London, 1855.
39. B. Hodgson, Essys on the *Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*, London, 1874.
40. D. C. Boulger, *Central Asian Questions*, London, 1885, p. 345.

41. G. Sandberg, *An Exploration of Tibet*, Calcutta, 1904, pp. 13-14.
42. V. G. Kiernan, 'India, China and Tibet', *Journal of the Greater India, Society*, Calcutta, Volume 14, 1955, p. 117.
43. T. Holdich, *Tibet the Mysterious*, London, 1908, p. 225.
44. W. W. Rockhill, *Land of the Lamas*, New York, 1891, p. 288. See also F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet*, London, 1957, pp. 19-23 ; 279-80.
45. S. C. Das, Autobiography : *Narratives of the Incidents of my Early Life*, Calcutta, 1969.
46. G. Sandberg, *The Exploration of Tibet*, Calcutta, 1904, p. 172.
47. *Englishman's Overland Mail*, Calcutta, 20 March, 1888.
48. P. Sykes, *The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Mortimer Durand*, London, 1926. p. 8.
49. *Ibid*, p. 167.
50. *Ibid*, p. 167.
51. Cited in A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1960, p. 191.
52. Lansdowne Papers, Eur. D. 558/2, Lansdowne to Cross, 28 June, 1889.
53. Lansdowne Papers, Eur. D. 558/2, Lansdowne to Cross, 22 January, 1889.
54. 'Lord Salisbury says we shall not see the end till we dictate our terms at Lhassa', Lansdowne Papers Eur. D. 558/2, Cross to Lansdowne, 7 February, 1889.
55. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Vol. 67, Annexure 2 to Enclosure 1 in No. 13, J. C. White, Bengal, 9 June, 1894.
56. Ibid, Enclosure No. 4 in No. 14, H. J. S. Cotton, 22 July, 1895.
57. L/PS/7/112, No. 461, Enclosure in 54, Captain G. Chenevix Trench to Resident, Kashmir, 17 September, 1898.
58. L/PS/3/354, No 634, Bradford Chamber of Commerce to the Secretary of State for India, 27 July, 1896.

59. P. Griffiths, *The History of the Indian Tea Industry*, London, 1967, p. 128.
60. *The Times*, London, 9 February, 1898, p. 8, quoted Lord Salisbury (on the Chitral Expedation) as saying that while he was opposed to a military 'Forward policy' he believed a 'Forward policy is inevitable—that is to say, we must gradually convert to our way of thinking in matters of civilization these splendid tribes.' He 'fully understood the passion of Mohammedan feeling—arising from the pride of their thousand year history of military conquest.' Lord Roberts in a speech to the House of Lords on 7 March, 1898 also emphasised that a Forward policy did not necessarily entail military subjugation by pointing to the administrative work of Sir Robert Sandeman in Baluchistan. *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 56, Col. 752.
61. *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 54, 7 March, 1898, Column 750.
62. Ardagh Papers, PRO 30/40/10, 9 July, 1893.

CHAPTER III

CURZON AND THE ROAD TO LHASA

Anglo-Tibetan relations were in a state of virtual deadlock during Lord Elgin's term of office (1894—98). The Viceroy was quite impervious to the pleas of officials urging a stronger response to Tibetan obstructiveness. 'I wonder,' asked the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal,

> If Your Excellency's attention has been drawn to the state of affairs at Yatung. In the presence of the more important problems of the North-West Frontier, the difficulties of the North-East Frontier are apt to look small. It will be very unfortunate if the Treaty, which took so many years to accomplish, should be frustrated and made useless, but this seems to be the case. We have used Chinese influence to compel the Tibetans to give us an entrepot for trade at Yatung, but they allow no one to go there, or to interview our Political Officer, and have built a wall and a gate in front of Rinchingong for the better control of the traffic. They still occupy positions on the north within the boundary assigned to Sikkim by the Treaty, and we have yet made no representation about this, and done nothing to turn them out.[1]

However, Elgin, alive neither to the prospect of a burgeoning trade between India and Tibet nor moved by a 'dispute about a worthless piece of territory'[2], refused to alter course, for in his judgement 'This is eminently a case where bullying is out of place.'[3] And so it remained until his successor, George Nathaniel Curzon arrived to take charge on 6 January, 1899.

The advent of Lord Curzon heralded a new chapter in Anglo-Tibetan relations. Barely forty when he assumed office, the Viceroy as if in anticipation of the day, had travelled widely in the East, given much thought to its problems; and his writings, a product of this experience, won him broad acclaim in his own country. 'Asia', his biographer Lord Ronaldshay was later to

remark, 'laid her spell upon him ; stirred the idealism latent in his nature ; intrigued him, fascinated him ; filled his mind'.[4] He was by temperament and inclination guardian of an imperial inheritance by right of race and class. Sir Keith Feiling, the noted Tory historian, observed perceptively :

> His mind, drawing power from his tremendous vitality, was exalted rather than imaginative, lofty rather than broad, encyclopaedic rather than piercing. Ceaselessly ardent in pursuing knowledge he won her less by power of thought than by act of storm ; he liked his horizons hard and firm, and his verities documented. There was, rather, in him a species of conservative Calvinism—a sense of the ordained fate and duty laid upon great peoples and ruling classes to inherit the earth. The Almighty, he told the Indian Civil Service, had set their hands upon "the greatest of their ploughs". With what spontaneity the words "corps d'élite" fell from him when he spoke of the English in India.[5]

Sensitive to the traditions of pomp and circumstance that had attended the rule of every great dynasty in India's past ; glorying in durbars as much for their colour and pageantry as for their popular mystique, Curzon was, nevertheless, equally aware of the muscular economic values of his time, whose fulfilment for him constituted one of the essential props of empire. 'It is only in the East', he wrote in his formative years, 'and especially in the Far East, that we may hope to create open markets for British manufacturers. Every port, every town and every village that passes into French or Russian hands is an outlet lost to Manchester, Bradford and Bombay.'[6]

Curzon's *weltanschauung* was compounded by fear and mistrust of Russia, his country's principal rival in continental Asia. In his view her

> 'ultimate ambition is the domination of Asia....acquiescence in the aims of Russia at Tehran or Meshed will not save Seistan...acquiescence at Kashgar will not divert Russian eyes from Tibet. Each morsel but whets the appetite for more, and inflames the passion for pan-Asiatic dominion. If Russia is entitled to these ambitions, still more is Britain entitled, nay compelled, to defend that which she has won, and to resist the minor encroachments which are only part of the larger plan.'[7]

It has been said of the elder Pitt that after long years of study, in early political life, of the statistics of French commerce and industry, he reached the conclusion that in France England faced her principal adversary on the road to imperial greatness. Curzon, likewise, had watched the growth of the Russian Empire ; studied its commercial and political methods ; travelled widely in its newly acquired dominions in Central Asia : the outcome was a book and a major article which he published in one of the leading journals of the day.[8]

With Curzon firmly in charge the Bengal officials were lent a sympathetic ear. No longer did their complaints about Tibetan obstructiveness concerning trade, the continuing incursions into northern Sikkim, the fiction of Chinese control at Lhasa fall on barren ground. Soon the Viceroy was repeating these charges to the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton. 'We seem, in fact, in respect of your policy towards Tibet', he wrote, 'to be moving in a vicious circle. If we apply to Tibet, we either receive no reply, or are referred to the Chinese Resident. If we apply to the latter, he excuses his failure by his inability to put any pressure on Tibet. As a policy this appears to be both unproductive and inglorious.'[9] As the trade mart at Yatung had proved unsatisfactory, a new one should be opened at Phari. And while he would not for the moment insist on stationing a British official there, the right of such an official to visit the place, should the need arise, ought to be pressed. The Viceroy was irked to discover that while Nepalese and Bhutias traded freely in Tibet, Hindu merchants from India could only visit that country through Nepal. Here was a case of imperial dignity affronted ; of imperial interests denied. The time had come to set British policy on a new course.

A warning shot was fired across the Amban's bows :

> The readiness of my predecessor and myself to reconsider the boundary question affords proof of our goodwill towards Tibet. Concession in respect to the frontier lands near Giaogong can, however, only be agreed to on the clear and difinite understanding that matters as to trade will be placed on a proper footing, and to secure this it is essential that

> natives of British India should have access to and be permitted to trade freely at Phari. Phari is the nearest point in Tibet at which a real market can be looked for, and I cannot agree that a change from Yatung to any point nearer to it than Phari would be a satisfactory solution of the problem.[10]

Hamilton, however, had doubts on the timing of India's demand and decided to consult Salisbury at the Foreign Office. As China's authority in Tibet was reduced to a shadow and Britain had less need of her support against a possible confrontation with Russia, now that the hollowness of Peking's strength had been exposed by Japan, Salisbury was agreeable to the Government of India pressing ahead in their attempts to open direct communications with Lhasa. The task was to find a suitable emissary. Bengal recommended Ugyen Kazi, the Bhutanese Agent, resident in Darjeeling, 'as he seems to be honest and intelligent, his only defect being that he does not speak English and has little education.'[11] The Government of India agreed, though somewhat reluctantly, as they were uneasy about his reliability. Wanting another string to their bow, they suggested that Le Mesurier the Political Officer in Sikkim, endeavour to establish contacts of his own in Tibet. Nevertheless, it was a fact that Ugyen Kazi was a frequent visitor to Lhasa, and so, India informed Bengal, on his next visit to the Tibetan capital he should be instructed,

> to let it be known confidentially to the Tibetan authorities that the Government of India will readily receive a Tibetan of rank, if the Dalai Lama is willing to send one. He may also be authorised to say that the Government of India are prepared to make concessions in the matters of the boundary, if additional facilities are given for trade ; and he might hint, if he finds an opportunity for so doing, that the Government of India would probably be ready to pay liberally for the acquisition of rights in the Chumbi Valley as far as Phari, and that they would be willing to negotiate direct with the Tibetans on the subject.[12]

Meanwhile, for what it was worth, use could still be made of China. It was suggested by the Government of India that the British Ambassador in Peking, Sir Claude Macdonald, might

bring some pressure to bear on the Tsungli Yamen (the equivalent department to the Foreign Office, and a name which was later to change to Wai-wu Pu) to coax or cajole their Tibetan dependency into opening negotiations with Britain.[13]

In India the search for a suitable emissary, and the tapping of all possible sources of information concerning Tibet was pursued with tireless energy. H. S. Barnes, the officiating Secretary to the Foreign Department, on the Viceroy's instructions, got into direct touch with Paul Mowis, a resident of Darjeeling who was reputed to be an expert on the subject. Mowis's account, a compound of rumour and half-truth, was typical of its time. He had heard for instance that a party of Russians, led by a man whose name in the Tibetan alphabet was spelt Sharanuff, had recently visited Lhasa. Then, recalling that the famous Russian explorer Prejavelsky had a secretary named Baranoff, he presumed that the two must be the same.

According to Mowis, the basis of China's power was her exclusive monopoly over the Tibetan market and the large payments she made to the High Lamas. Though the eight million people of Tibet were well off, they produced no manufactures and were utterly dependent on the suzerain for their needs. Confirmed in these rights and privileges by custom and goodwill, China naturally was loath to share these with Britain. Hence she was encouraging Lhasa to put obstacles in the way of Indo-Tibetan trade. However, Britain did have certain compensating advantages : owing to the

> proximity of Lhasa, manufactured articles could be supplied from India much more cheaply than through China—and of a better quality. Tea, for example, which is largely consumed in Tibet, could be supplied from Darjeeling at a fourth of the price, and of much better quality than the brick tea which the Tibetans get from China ; that the Tibetans are a practical people and would readily take to Indian goods, if they are convinced of their cheapness and good quality, and that the only way to convince them is to get into direct communication with the Lamas and to ignore the Ambans.[14]

Thus far Mowis's analysis was not without touches of realism ; what followed came rightly from a fevered imagination. He

suggested that with tact and judiciously applied pressure, the Tibetans might be persuaded to sell or lease the whole of the Chumbi Valley up to Phari. With Phari in British hands, the necessary capital from Calcutta would soon make it possible to send the best English goods into the interior of Tibet. Even the Raja of Bhutan was apparently prepared to cooperate by allowing a road to be constructed through his country.

In exchange for the capital needed to finance this project, he had made known his willingness to grant a concession of a twenty-mile strip of land for the cultivation of tea. Mowis hoped, in a few months time, to visit Lhasa in the company of fellow Buddhists from Ceylon, a trip which according to his story was being financed by Rothschild, the *New York Herald* and the *Englishman*. Mowis as intermediary? Bengal thought not, as he 'would not be regarded in Darjeeling as a person suitable for employment in any capacity.'[15] And no wonder, for the Bhutanese denied all knowledge of the scheme.

In the meantime, Ugyen Kazi having returned from Lhasa revealed what had transpired between the Dalai Lama and himself in the presence of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Commissioner of Rajshahi. The British, he had emphasised to the Dalai, in spite of their great strength had shown the utmost forbearance in their dealings with Tibet. The Tibetan pontiff on his part complained about the Chinese, but 'demurred to any direct correspondence with the officials of the British Government, for fear of compromising his relations with the Chinese Government.'[16]

Ugyen Kazi summed up his impressions of Tibetan opinion on subjects which were of special interest to India: Tibet would not agree to the opening of Phari to Indian traders for three important reasons: the carrying trade between Kalimpong and Phari was under the control of sectional interests—200 families in all—in the Chumbi Valley; and the Lhasa authorities for reasons of their own were not inclined to interfere with this monopoly. The Tibetans were also apprehensive that if Indian traders were allowed in, quarrels and disputes might be referred by them to the British and involve Tibet in complications

with Britain. Lastly, in view of its inveterate dislike of all foreigners Lhasa sought to maintain its policy of exclusion. As Tibetans themselves were not denied entry to India, they could go to Calcutta and make all the purchases they needed. So sensitive was the question of a trade mart that 'Ugyen Kazi stated that he dared not propose to the Tibetans the opening of Phari to Indian trade, lest he should be suspected of working against their interests and his own trade with Tibet ruined.'[17]

The Bhutanese Vakil approved the Government's proposal to address a letter to the Dalai Lama, but advised that the plan be proceeded with cautiously. As a first step, he agreed to draft and despatch a letter of his own to the Tibetan pontiff explaining the substance of British policies, and promised to get in touch with the Bengal Government as soon as he had received a reply. Six months later, in March 1900, they were informed that Ugyen had corresponded with the Dalai Lama, in which he had advised him to settle with the British Government, whose aid he might need one day against the Russians or the Chinese. The Tibetan ruler replied categorically that on no account would he allow the Russians into his country.[18]

Meanwhile, the Government of India had not been inactive. Shortly after Ugyen Kazi's first interview with the Governor of Bengal in September 1899, they resumed their search for other possible emissaries. Their attention was drawn to Taw Sein Ko, the Burmese Government's adviser on Chinese affairs who had the supposed advantage of being Chinese. It was suggested that he could make his way up through Yunnan and Eastern Tibet to Lhasa. Once there, his task would be to convince the Dalai Lama that Britain's only desire was to 'establish freer intercourse with Tibet and to gain facilities for trade, and that, so far from having any aggressive views, the Government of India are prepared to make concessions in regard to the Sikkim-Tibet boundary, if the Tibetans on their side will relax their obstruction in the matter of trade.'[19]

Burma's response proved disappointing. Taw Sein Ko, if he did eventually get to Tibet as a Chinese, would be regarded there as an imposter, as he was a 'person of mixed

race born and brought up in Burma, and further, being very fat, would probably be unequal to the physical hardships involved in a journey to and a residence in Lhasa.'[20]

The approach to Burma was coupled with a similar request to the British Resident in Kashmir, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir H. C. Talbot. Talbot expressed the view that the agent the government were looking for should preferably be a co-religionist of the Lhasa authorities; should be a person of sufficient standing to enable him to communicate directly with the highest members of the Tibetan hierarchy; and, not least, have great powers of physical endurance. Five years ago he could have recommended the ideal person: Chirang Palgez, a Ladakhi with a great mastery of spoken and written Tibetan; a former treasurer of Leh on the friendliest terms with the abbot of one or the great monasteries, who had in the past visited Lhasa as head of the Lapchak mission. Unfortunately, he had since surrendered himself to the pleasures of Tibetan beer; so neither his natural gifts, nor the advantages of his social position could be of much use now. However, Talbot promised to consult with his assistant at Leh, Captain R. L. Kennion, as soon as the latter had returned to his post after leave of absence in England. Kennion duly compiled a note on the subject which Talbot forwarded to India. As he was to win a commendation from the Government and his principal proposal proved acceptable to his superiors, this document deserves careful consideration.

In Kennion's view it would not be difficult to find someone to carry a letter to Lhasa, 'but I do not think it would be possible to find a man who could be trusted in any way to represent the views of the Government of India or to negotiate with the Lhasa Government on their behalf.'[21] Experience had shown that the Tibetans were possessed by a dread of foreigners which no amount of argument or conciliation would dispel. On the other hand 'firmness and plain-speaking (one might add threats) may have an immediate effect.'[22] A Ladakhi Mohammedan would hardly do as an emissary since his own community had a monopoly of the Tibetan trade. He therefore

suggested himself for the role. To give the proceedings a normal air the Maharaja of Kashmir could empower him to collect revenue from his Minsar Jagir—a landholding near Lake Manasarowar—which would provide him with a perfect excuse to visit Gartok in Western Tibet.

These it seemed were not Kennion's only thoughts on the subject. Six months previously, he had of his own volition penned a note to Talbot which he enclosed with his latest draft. Here, Kennion listed the strong commercial pressures which could be brought to bear on Lhasa.

For a start he would put a stop to the Lapchak mission—not suddenly but gradually in order to give Lhasa time to reflect, and, more importantly, because the total breakdown of commercial intercourse could bode ill for India too ; for the trade that

> is slowly progressing might be retarded for many years, and the prospect of Indian tea-growers finding a new market in this direction indefinitely postponed. As an immediate result, the closing of an important source of work supply of the Punjab and Kashmir might be regarded as certain, and the consequent throwing out of employment of a large number of British and Kashmiri subjects engaged in the trade.'[23]

However, with an opportunity of pointing out to the Urkhu of Gartok 'that Western Tibet is almost entirely dependent on Ladakh and British India for its grain supply, [he] would endeavour to obtain the assent of the Lhassan Government to any arrangements proposed if not involving too radical a change.'[24]

The Lapchak missions, which Kennion proposed should be slowly strangled, involved a traffic of gifts and commodities from three categories of people : from the Kashmir Durbar to the Lhasa Government ; from one set of important dignitaries to another ; and last of all, donations from monasteries in Ladakh to those in Tibet. It was the financial relationship between the monastic establishments of the two countries that Kennion found most offensive and damaging, for

> the system of Lamaism causes a great drain of the country's

> resources towards Lhassa. Every Lama that goes to Lhassa, and they practically all go, at the close of their novitiate, takes with him a greater or smaller quantity of wealth. The frequent transfer of kushoks between the affiliated monasteries of Ladakh and Lhassa is also an ingeneously devised system for the inflow of wealth to Lhassa. Tibet is numb and lifeless under its grasp, and some of its tentacles extend even into Ladakh. The less nutriment its rows of suckers, the monasteries, are able to extract from this country, the better for the people, and indirectly the better for the Kashmir revenues. The policy of those responsible for the administration of Ladakh should be directed towards the liberation of the Church of Ladakh from the domination of its 'Rome' ... but in the meantime it is obvious that the direct support of the system which the state has hitherto afforded by supplying the monasteries with free carriage should be withdrawn.[25]

Kennion's suggestion that he be allowed to visit Gartok and personally hand over a letter from the Viceroy was accepted, but he was told not to go to the Minsar Jagir as this might break the secrecy necessary for the success of his mission.[26]

Sarat Chandra Das, the Bengali explorer, was then asked to draft a Tibetan translation of Curzon's letter to the Dalai Lama. Its tone was conciliatory. It explained that the British Government was animated by friendly feelings towards Tibet and its people; and had no desire to interfere in their internal administration, but sought merely to promote trade with India. As such the Viceroy was anxious that Tibet should have confidence in Britain's friendship and remain 'free from encroachment from any other quarter'. The Dalai Lama was gently reminded that the Trade Regulations of 1893 were not being observed satisfactorily and that neither was the problem of the Sikkim-Tibet border settled. Finally, Curzon offered to receive a Tibetan envoy to discuss these and other matters. Kennion took delivery of the letter but was stopped outside Gartok by a party of Tibetans who refused him permission to proceed further. Eventually, the chief Urkhu having come out to meet him, Kennion handed over the Viceroy's communication and was assured that it would be forwarded to the Dalai Lama. The British officer, much impressed by some

of the Tibetans, was hopeful that their contact with him would reassure them of his country's friendly intentions.

Rumours were now afloat that a party from Lhasa led by one Dorjieff had gone to Russia. India was first informed of these reports by the Foreign Office in London which had received a copy of *The Journal de Saint Petersburg* of 15 October 1900, describing the event, from the British Chargé-d'Affaires, Charles Hardinge.[28] The administrative wheels were set in motion. Bengal, asked for confirmation, turned to their two trusted sources, Sarat Chandra Das and Sherab Gyatso, the Lama of Ghoom, both of whom reported meeting two Tibetans from the influential Drepung monastery, but had heard no word from them about any such mission.

Das suggested that the reported mission could be Mongolian, while Curzon who still had hopes of hearing from the Dalai Lama, dismissed the story as a fraud.

> That the Russians have for a long time been trying to penetrate the place is certain ; that a Russian Tibetan, or Mongolian Embassy may have conceivably been there and may have opened negotiations is also possible ; but that the Tibetan Lamas have so far overcome their incurable suspicion of all things European to lead an open Mission to Europe seems to me most unlikely. Tibet is, I think, much more likely in reality to look to us for protection than to look to Russia, and I cherish a secret hope that the communication which I am trying to open with the Dalai Lama may inaugurate some sort of relations between us.[29]

Indeed, six months previously he had expressed similar optimism concerning the future course of Anglo-Tibetan relations. In his view, the myth of the Chinese having been exposed, and with every chance of Russian making approaches to Tibet, Lhasa would seek the friendship of a great power.

> That our case should not be stated in the circumstances, and that judgement should go against us by default, would be a great pity. Inasmuch as we have no hostile designs against Tibet ; as we are in a position to give them something upon the frontier to which they attach great importance and we none ; and as the relations we desire to establish with them are almost exclusively those of trade, I do not think it

would be impossible, if I could get into communication with the Tibetan Government, to come to terms.[30]

In June 1901 the Foreign Office was told of yet another mission from Tibet to Russia led by Dorjieff. Its informant was the British Consul-General at Odessa who enclosed a translated extract from a local paper, the *Odessa Novosti*, 25 June, 1901, informing its readers that, 'Odessa will welcome today an Extraordinary Mission from the Dalai Lama of Tibet, which is proceeding to St. Petersburg with diplomatic instructions of importance.'[31] More ominous was the outburst of the *Novoe Vremye*, 30 June, 1901. 'The difficulties,' it thundered,

> encountered by the Tibetan Mission on its journey through India explains why Tibet, who has already seen the lion's paw raised over it, turns its eyes towards the Empire of the north. Even now the lion is not quiet, but forges its chains in India itself. It is no secret to anyone against whom all their rifles, guns and cartridges are collected, all these factories of cordite and lyddite erected. These have, indeed, wrought no miracles in South Africa, where England has striven in vain to deprive a small but valiant people of its independence. Perhaps rumours of this struggle have penetrated to Tibet.'[32]

The next few days, however, saw a softening in attitude. The *Novoe Vremye* in its editions of the 1st and 3rd of July, 1901, went to great pains in reproducing a full interview with Dr. Badmayeff, the man commonly believed to be the architect of Russia's Tibetan policy, in which he denied that the recent mission had a diplomatic character since the Dalai Lama was a subject of the Chinese Emperor and it was Russian policy to uphold the integrity of China.

The papers must have taken their cue from the Government for when Sir Charles Scott, the British Ambassador, called at the Russian Foreign Office, Count Lamsdorff, the Foreign Minister, 'characterised as ridiculous and utterly unfounded the conclusions drawn in certain organs of the Russian Press that these visitors were charged with any diplomatic or political mission.'[33] A week later Lamsdorff clarified the matter by saying that the mission was 'of the same character as those sent by the Pope to the faithful in foreign lands.'[34] As *it*

happened Russia's Buriat Mongol subjects, of whom Dorjieff was one, venerated the Dalai Lama as the head of their Faith.

The two Dorjieff Missions, particularly the second which reportedly passed through India, indicated to Calcutta how woefully inadequate was its political intelligence. Thus far Curzon had been inclined to view his relations with Lhasa as a local problem ; it was the Russian factor which henceforth was to lend a new and urgent dimension to Anglo-Tibetan relations. From the middle of 1901, the Government of India's policy was set on a firmer course. Curzon's first conciliatory letter to the Dalai Lama having been returned unopened, the Viceroy decided to address himself once more to the Tibetan Pontiff; only this time the tone was stronger. Its bearer was to be Ugyen Kazi. And to emphasise the seriousness with which India regarded Lhasa's behaviour, the first unopened letter was also enclosed with the words : 'the action taken by the Urkhu of Gartok seems to have been improper and insulting ; and I am unable to believe that his conduct can have been in accordance with Your Holiness's approval.'[35] The Dalai Lama was reminded that neither the Sikkim-Tibet boundary problem nor questions of trade as provided for in the 1893 Regulations had been satisfactorily settled. The Viceroy's letter ended on a forceful note :

> These are matters which the Great British Government cannot regard with indifference ; and I wish to impress upon Your Holiness that, whilst I retain the desire to enter into friendly relations with yourself and to promote a better understanding between the two nations, yet if no attempt is made to reciprocate these feelings and if, on the contrary, they are treated with rudeness and indifference, my Government must reserve their right to take such steps as may seem to them necessary and proper to enforce the terms of the Treaty, and to ensure that the Trade Regulations are observed.[36]

The Secretary of State was informed that

> should this letter meet with the fate of its predecessor, we contemplate, subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government the adoption of more practical measures with a view to securing the commercial and political

> facilities, which our friendly representations have failed to procure···But we may add, on the present occasion, that the overtures, whatever may be their real nature, that are now being made either by Tibet to Russia, or more probably by Russia to Tibet, have led me to think that before long our political concern in Tibet may be quickened, and that steps may require to be taken for the adequate safeguarding of British interests upon a part of the frontier where they have never hitherto been impugned.[37]

The need for fresh sources of information regarding Tibet had indeed become more pressing than ever, eventually forcing Curzon to turn to the Nepalese Durbar whom he had refused previously to take into his confidence lest, like the Afghans, they began developing ambitions of their own. Putting aside his suspicions for the moment the Viceroy approached Chandra Shamsher, aware that Nepal had long-established ties with Tibet and her representatives at Lhasa were well placed for significant information. The Nepalese Prime Minister promptly responded to Curzon's overture by sending him a report of a long conversation between his man in Lhasa and an important Tibetan official. The latter vigorously denied that any mission had been sent to Russia from Tibet. It was the custom, he pointed out, of Mongolian monks to come to Tibet to study, and on the completion of their courses to return home laden with certificates and other marks of honour. Tibet's policy of excluding all foreigners was applied impartially. Thus, even when a party of Russians armed with Chinese passports sought entry they were turned back at the frontier.

Six months later in December, 1901, the Nepalese had another talk with the same official, pressing him for information concerning the purpose of Dorjieff's mission. The Tibetan blamed the British for rumour-mongering. 'This misapprehension,' he commented, 'is due to the publication of much false news by Englishmen,'[38] a charge not without basis. For instance, on the 27th and 28th November, 1901, when the Kalimpong Fair was being held with Sarat Chandra Das, Sub-Inspector Laden La and Deputy Commissioner Walsh of the Darjeeling District present, the current story in European circles

was 'that an emissary of the Dalai Lama to Russia was expected to be coming through Kalimpong, and that he was going to arrive at the time of the Mela so as to escape observation and so pass on unnoticed. This entirely groundless rumour originated in a letter written by Miss Taylor, the missionary at Yatung, to Mrs Graham at Kalimpong, which the Reverend J. A. Graham has made over to me.'[39] Of such samples of bazaar gossip, the most amusing was to be found in the Diary of Trans-Frontier information. One entry records that,

> There is a rumour that the Dalai Lama is secretly cohabiting with a high bred nun and that, if a male child is the result, he will openly be declared to be heir to the country and be proclaimed King; the Tibetans claiming from China the independence of their land. Also, that the present Dalai Lama is the last incarnation. It is also said that the above is not true.[40]

However, the reports of Indian officials and the Government's unofficial advisers were written in a more serious vein. Two such documents during this crucial period (mid-1901) deserve attention; the first by Captain W. F. O'Connor—later to accompany Younghusband to Lhasa as his principal interpreter and among the Government's most distinguished frontier officers—was the first authentic expression of what may be called Curzonianism by a subordinate.

O'Connor's opening paragraphs were devoted to the development of Russian expansionism across Asia, in Mongolia, Manchuria and Chinese Turkestan. As this rapid extension of the Tsar's Empire was accompanied by an equally impressive growth of railways, it was evident that soon the whole trade of Central Asia and Northern China would come under Russian control. And while striving to establish herself in such a position, Russia would not be found wanting in any effort to bring Tibet within her sphere of influence. She could move to Lhasa from Koko Nor which had once been explored by Prejavalsky. The presence of a Russian representative in Lhasa and the preponderating influence of his country in Tibet could have an unsettling effect on the Himalayan hill-states and India. The likely effect on Nepal was clearly more disturbing,

for the army relied heavily on Gurkha recruits, a sentiment that was to be echoed a year later by Lord Roberts the Commander-in-Chief himself.

The chief obstacle to Tibet's progress was its monastic system ; the pampered Lamas being keenly aware that any extension of education to the common people would hasten the end of their power. For a start O'Connot suggested the despatch of a column of troops to the Chumbi Valley to regularise trade there. 'But such a step would be only a means to an end—the end being a march to Lhasa.'[41] Should the Tibetan authorities prove recalcitrant, the Chumbi Valley could be held by Britain ; its possession would prove valuable for commercial and strategic reasons. The Government's aim must be a British representative at Lhasa just as there was one at Katmandu. The operation of these measures would cause a simultaneous decline of Chinese and Russian influence in Tibet, and its overall effect in the other important areas of Asia would be salutary for,

> The news of this action on our part would spread rapidly over the whole of Central Asia and China, and could not fail to increase our prestige. Tibet includes the sources of the Yangtse-kiang, the Mekong, and the Salween, and borders on the great Szechuan province—the most thickly populated and one of the richest in China. Our influence exerted from so commanding a position would certainly facilitate future negotiations regarding such questions as the trade of the Yangtse Valley and Yunnan, the construction of railways from Burmah or elsewhere through these and adjacent provinces and the treatment of Europeans generally over the whole of southern China.[42]

The second document[43] came from the pen of the Reverend Graham Sandberg, who had often advised the Government on Tibetan matters. Like O'Connor, Sandberg emphasised the Russian threat to India's security, a threat made more acute by the very helplessness of the Tibetan population—unwarlike and scattered over a vast territory. This argument was of course a double-edged one, for if Russians found it easy to penetrate Tibet so, too, would the British. There would be

little danger of an ill-fated expedition in headlong reteat similar to the one from Kabul in 1879, concluded Sandberg.

By the end of 1901 India was certain that Ugyen Kazi's second mission to Lhasa had failed,[44] and that further attempts to communicate with the Dalai Lama would prove equally futile. An important watershed had been reached in Anglo-Tibetan relations. Both in Calcutta and London, the merits of an alternative policy were debated at some considerable length. In India the preparatory work for the contingency of an armed mission went ahead. J. C. White did a survey of the passes into Tibet ; his report also contained significant scientific data on the effect of high altitudes on the human respiratory system.[45] A year later, O'Connor submitted a detailed report on trade routes with assessments of the commercial importance of each.[46]

The time had now come for India to address the Home Government once more on the subject of a Tibetan policy. They would not recommend a commercial blockade as such action might harm the interests of Indian traders and ultimately result in the diversion of Tibetan trade to Nepal. On the other hand they proposed that the Tibetans who were using the grazing grounds of Giaogong be forcibly removed by White and a company of Gurkhas. As provided for under Article 9 of the Trade and Pasturage Regulations of 1893, White could send advance warning of his action to his Chinese counterpart. They suggested that in the face of unrelenting Tibetan hostility the question of occupying the Chumbi Valley, until such time as Tibet had given satisfaction on issues outstanding between the two Governments, should be seriously considered. The concluding passsage of the despatch with its pride in Empire and its plea for greater urgency lest a greater peril threatened from afar bore the Viceroy's unmistakable stamp :

> The policy of isolation pursued by the Tibetan Government is one that, from its own point of view, it may not be difficult to comprehend. But it is not compatible either with proximity to the territories of a great civilized power at whose hands the Tibetan Government enjoys the opportunities

> both for intercourse and trade, or with due respect for the treaty stipulations into which the Chinese Government has entered on its behalf. It is, indeed, the most extraordinary anachronism of the twentieth century that there should exist within less than 300 miles of the borders of British India a State and a Government with whom political relations do not as so much exist and with whom it is impossible even to exchange a written communication. Such a situation cannot in any case be lasting. But it seems desirable that it should be brought to an end with as little delay and commotion as possible since there are factors in the case that might at a later date invest the breaking down of these unnatural barriers with a wider and more serious significance.[47]

Lee-Warner, the Under Secretary of State at the India Office, was none too happy about this latest despatch from Simla. 'I do not think much of the "anachronism of the twentieth century." India both internally and externally will present scores of such even in the twenty-first century. All we are concerned with are our own interests,'[48] was his first terse comment. He accepted that the Government of India had made out a clear case for retaliation. But they had omitted to state how the Nepalese would view a forward move by the British since they themselves had a treaty of alliance with Tibet. More important, Nepal's friendship was of such importance to Britain that the ill-tempered conduct of Lhasa seemed insignificant in comparison. There were other factors also to be considered : Afghanistan, the state of the tribes on the North-West frontier and the continued presence of British legions in South Africa. Until the country was able to extract itself from the Boer War the sound policy would be to provoke no dispute with Tibet. In the meantime the whole question should be held up for review with the Foreign Office. This last sentiment went down well with Hamilton who remarked :

> The position is so ridiculous that it cannot continue. But before we determine our future action from an Indian point of view we should have the Foreign Office's opinion upon the subject from an international standpoint.[49]

Lee-Warner and Curzon were clearly at odds over their attitudes toward Nepal. The Viceroy hardly needed the Under-

Secretary of State to advise him to work in harness with the Nepalese Durbar. Nor was he unaware that given half a a chance the Gurkhas would be happy to march on Lhasa.[50] Against this was to be weighed the risk that too much encouragement to Nepal might make her into another Afghanistan,[51]—a prospect no ruler of British India could relish. Indeed, Curzon had already had a brush with the Nepalese Durbar when he queried them on their imports of arms and ammunition and their surreptitious domestic manufacture. The question, put in Curzon's inimitable manner, incensed Chandra Shamsher, who vigorously denied the Viceroy's accusation. The British Resident, Colonel Pears was after all permitted to visit the arsenal at Soondri Jal in October, 1901. The quality of arms produced there was poor; this, and the nature of the country, its unruly inhabitants, the developing threat to the north, made it imperative that Nepal be allowed to import better and greater quantities of weapons from Britain. Finally, concluded the Rana pointedly, 'if His Excellency the Viceroy were as free and generous in the matter of armament to us as His Excellency has been to Afghanistan, I am sure that the services which Nepal could render in time of need, at much less cost and with absolute certainty, would compare very favourably with those of the Amir.'[52] Eventually the Indian Government relented, but the episode served to underline one of their dilemmas : the Viceroy in the driving seat had to decide which of his many reins he should use, as the slightest error of judgement could disturb the finely wrought political balance in the Himalayas.

While awaiting the outcome of his second letter to the Dalai Lama, during which time O'Connor and Sandberg were compiling their Notes on possible courses of action, Curzon decided to test the ground in London through his private correspondence with Hamilton. Writing to the Secretary of State he asked for the Home Government's reaction to the possibility of a Russian protectorate in Tibet. Britain had as much right to object to such a development as would Russia if Britain had similarly reduced Manchuria.

> Tibet is not necessary to Russia; it has no relations, commercial or otherwise, with Russia; its independent existence implies no menace to Russia. On the other hand, a Russian protectorate there would be a distinct menace and a positive source of danger to ourselves. I hope that no Government at home would quietly acquiesce in such a surrender,[53]

The Secretary of State, however, showed a disappointing lack of enthusiasm for any forward move in the Himalayas. Assuming that the Viceroy did not get a civil reply to his letter from the Dalai Lama, any show of force by the Indian Government would quickly turn into an invasion of Tibet; and although a treaty concluded in Lhasa might put Anglo-Tibetan relations on a securer footing, such action could also drive Tibet into Russia's arms and at the same time alienate China. Moreover, the Home Government was engaged in delicate negotiations with Peking on matters of greater moment and would deprecate any move that could jeopardise the chances of their success. As Russia was engaged in a similar operation over Manchuria the possibility of her seeking a protectorate in Tibet at this juncture, with the risk of antagonising Peking, seemed remote. An aggressive British move in the Himalayas would be quite untimely.

As an alternative Hamilton proposed that the Indian Government try and convince Lhasa about the danger of Russian expansion in Central Asia. Since the Tibetans dislike foreigners with a 'truly Chinese hatred'[54], India should work on those passions to keep the Russians at bay and essure Lhasa that its own object was to uphold Tibet's independence.

As a statement of the Home Government's current difficulties the letter was suitably frank but its appreciation of Curzon's dilemma was cavalier to the point of being provocative. The Viceroy reacted sharply. He had not proposed, in the first place, to rush headlong into a military adventure as had been implied but only to send a small escort of no more than two or three hundred men with his mission. Secondly, the problem here was not a matter of negotiating but of opening negotiations since communications to Lhasa remained un-

answered. But it was the blow to Imperial pride that hurt most:

> We must have sunk to a pitiable pass of weakness and humiliation, if we are to allow a lot of unarmed shepherds to graze their flocks every year in British territory, and are so frightened that we dare not turn them out. I venture to say that I know the Tibetan question pretty well, and that we shall not advance a single step or come to a solution of any sort, until we give some indication to the Dalai Lama that he cannot trample with impunity on our treaty or behave as Germany might do to Denmark.[55]

It was not that Curzon's colleagues in London regarded Russia with a kindly eye ; it was only that events were bringing to the surface a shift in the relative strengths of the Great Powers following the development of industry in Europe, especially in Germany, and forcing them to modify traditional attitudes of hostility and mistrust.

For instance, as a former Secretary of State for India, Salisbury knew the problems of Indian defence. In 1888 he had instructed the British Ambassador to deliver at St. Petersburg a warning that a Russian advance on Herat meant war with Britain. In 1891-92 he proved equally firm in the Pamir dispute. Nevertheless, the international balance of power was changing. In 1878, at the Congress of Berlin Salisbury saw Bismarck's treaty system first take shape, the importance of which 'was enhanced by another characteristic of this period of change, the relative decline of the strength of Britain.'[56] Her pre-eminent position in industry and commerce was being eroded, a truth that was becoming increasingly apparent in the last years of the nineteenth century. Even more striking was the relative decline of the country's naval strength. Sixty or seventy years before British naval supremacy stood unchallenged. Now Britain was forced to think in terms of a combination of powers, not merely a single rival. With time naval expenditure, once so sacrosanct, gave rise to public debate.

Thus, Salisbury's mild reaction to Russia's seizure of Port Arthur should have caused less surprise since relations with France were fast coming to a head in the Sudan. He went so

far as to instruct Sir N. O'Connor, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to enquire of Witte whether it would be possible for Russia and England to work together in China.[57] *The Times*[58] quoted Balfour as saying that all Britain claimed in China was equality of opportunity in matters of trade. The Government's fear was that a power with protectionist traditions would extend its influence in the Celestial Empire to the detriment of the commercial interests of others. Some three weeks later Salisbury was even more explicit :

> I cannot conceive why we should object to Russia going where it will, provided we are not excluded from going there too.[59]

The Prime Minister uttered this sombre warning in the House of Lords :

> Do not overtax your strength. However strong you may be, whether you are a man or a nation, there is a point beyond which your strength will not go. It is courage and wisdom to exert that strength up to the limit to which you may attain ; it is madness and ruin if you allow yourself to pass it.[60]

A few months later he elaborated his ideas in the following speech delivered on 5 May, 1898.

> You may roughly divide the nations of the world as the living and the dying···weak States are becoming weaker and the strong States are becoming stronger·· For one reason or another·· the living nations will gradually encroach on the territory of the dying, and the seeds and causes of conflict among civilized nations will speedily appear···These things may introduce causes of fatal difference between the great nations whose mighty armies stand opposite threatening each other·····It is a period which will tax our resolution, our tenacity, and Imperial instincts to the utmost. Undoubtedly we shall not allow England to be at a disadvantage in any rearrangement that may take place. On the other hand, we shall not be jealous if desolation and sterility are removed by the aggrandisement of a rival in regions to which our arms cannot extend···[61]

As an earnest of goodwill Salisbury asked that Russia hand back Port Arthur to the Chinese because of its strategic location ; he had no objection to her seeking an ice-free

commercial harbour elsewhere, or its connection with the Trans-Siberian Railway, then under construction.

The Russians remained obdurate and nothing came of the British overture. Meanwhile, Britain continued to be locked in rivalry with France, and relations with Germany proceeded fitfully from hope to despondency.

The outbreak of the Boer War in October 1899 and its prolongation earned Britain considerable hostility in Europe. Nor was the War popular with Anglo-Indian opinion as the following passage should make clear: 'We ourselves have already drawn attention to the evil effects of this utterly foolish "war" on our position in China, and that means in Asia; and Lord Salisbury, with Messrs Chamberlain and Balfour, are directly responsible for it……to the utter detriment of England, her honour, and her Empire in the East.'[62] Further, the stubborn resistance of the Boers was a testing experience for public and politicians alike. The limitations of British power were exposed; to the country's leaders, with the exception of Salisbury, the anchorage of an alliance was the need of the hour. The epoch of 'splendid isolation' was drawing to a close. Unfortunately in this difficult period the country lacked the presence of a strong hand. Salisbury was growing infirm and British foreign policy tended to drift. Curzon in a letter to Brodrick doubted that there was at all any policy whether for

> China, Persia, Morocco, Egypt or any other place in the world. Lord Salisbury is an adept at handling the present, witness Venezuela. But the future to him is anathema.
> Now an Empire cannot run on these lines. We must take stock, must look ahead, must determine our maximum and our minimum and above all must have a line. It is easy to blame the War Office here, the Exchequer there or the Cabinet everywhere. It is the ingrained vice of modern British statesmanship that is at fault.[63]

Hamilton's correspondence with Curzon, often starkly pessimistic, reflected, possibly, the general mood of his colleagues. The Secretary of State, for instance, felt that Britain was foredoomed in her rivalry with Russia, because Russia being half-Asiatic herself had unique powers of assimilation

and consolidation. He wondered, therefore, if it was wise to be associated with opposition to movements which were bound ultimately to succeed.[64]

A year later any hopes that Hamilton may have had of Britain coming to terms with Russia about a possible division of their respective spheres of influence in Asia were dashed.[65] Russian behaviour in China was reprehensible. By April 1901 the Secretary of State had come round to the view that Britain was in desperate need of an ally, and of the two European coalitions he would prefer the Triple Alliance.[66]

The Viceroy set himself firmly against an entangling Continental alliance[67]—here he was at one with Salisbury—and certainly not with Germany, the country which he said would, in the next twenty-five years, constitute the greatest threat to British interests. Hence 'any English Foreign Minister who desires to serve his country well, should never lose sight of that consideration.'[68]

Curzon also expressed surprise that Hamilton after so many years in high office should have entertained illusions about a settlement with Russia. Britain stood too much in Russia's way, whether at Constantinople, the Persian Gulf, Herat, Korea or Peking for any peace between the two to be really lasting.[69]

The Home Government's caution throughout 1901 on Tibetan matters—Hamilton put their case well when he wrote : 'the Tibetans are but the smallest pawns on the political chessboard, but castles, knights, and bishops may all be involved in trying to take that pawn'[70]—must be measured against the following considerations : first, the war in South Africa with its continuing drain on Britain's financial and manpower resources ; secondly, the need to concentrate Britain's best energies on the search for an ally. Negotiations were under way by the middle of the year with Japan and Germany, and there were even hopes that Russia could be tempted to see reason by agreeing to a mutually satisfactory arrangement in Asia.

Lansdowne, who had taken over the reins from Salisbury at the Foreign Office in November 1900, set about putting British

policy on a new course. The Boer War having exposed the perils of isolation, the new Foreign Secretary and some of his advisers began to cast around for suitable allies. In so doing they were reflecting the prevailing current of political opinion within the country, which had on occasion, found an echo in Hamilton's letters to Curzon.

A feature of the changing situation was the growing influence of the permanent staff of the Foreign Office. Francis Bertie, the Assistant Under-Secretary epitomised this new breed of officials : capable, ambitious and intent on playing a more positive role in the formulation of policy than had their predecessors.[71] Intensely suspicious of Germany, their instincts which were to blend well with those of Lansdowne and the King, made them gravitate towards a closer understanding with France. Such a step, given the existence of the Franco-Russian alliance, would inevitably point in the direction of St Petersburg. They had attempted to reach an accommodation with Russia, independently of France, over Persia and Manchuria in October 1901, but their overture was spurned by the Tsar's ministers. However, the thinking which inspired this move had an ominous ring for the future relations between Curzon and the Home Government.

In the face of Russian intransigence and Germany's own unbending terms for an alliance the pace of Anglo-Japanese negotiations quickened in the last quarter of 1901. If the new men in the Foreign Office were one major influence during this highly fluid period, the other undoubtedly was the Admiralty. Grenville aptly remarked :

> Selborne's memorandum[72] arguing that a Japanese alliance would strengthen the British navy everywhere had preceded the Cabinet decision to conclude the alliance. In the same way another memorandum, in which the First Lord of the Admiralty in October 1902 stressed for the first time the German naval menace, influenced Lansdowne in favour of an *entente* with France. The role played by the Admiralty was both new and striking.[73]

Although a rising Power, Japan was still something of an unknown quantity, and her insistence that the scope of the

treaty be confined to the Far East merely increased the doubts of Salisbury and Balfour concerning the value of such an alliance.[74] Only when she had won her spurs in the conflict with Russia in 1904-05 was this scepticism about her military prowess dispelled. Until then there was a lurking fear that Britain could find herself gratuitously embroiled in a Russo-Japanese quarrel.

Curzon hailed the agreement 'with unalloyed satisfaction,' welcoming in particular the skilful construction which would allow for its armed operation only in 'circumstances of extreme peril to both parties··· It is, therefore, an admirable counterpoise to the Franco-Russian alliance: and it should be an invaluable guarantee for the maintenance of peace.'[75]

The Viceroy may have had hopes that with the security of this alliance behind them the Home Government would have fewer qualms in permitting him to pursue a bolder policy towards Tibet. He was to be sorely disappointed. Even with the end of the Boer War in May 1902 this cautious trend continued. In August that year Curzon telegraphed Hamilton with the news that information had come to hand that under a secret Russo-Chinese agreement Tibet was to become a Russian protectorate. The Secretary of State agreed that China should be approached—but not immediately.

'Our commercial treaty,' he wrote to Curzon, 'which, if we can bring it off, will be a big coup is now passing through its penultimate stages, and will, I believe, in the course of the next few days be signed. I daresay, therefore, Lansdowne will prefer, until that treaty is signed, not to take up another question which might jeopardise the enormous commercial interest which that treaty touches and covers.'[76] True to their word Satow was instructed, once the treaty was signed, to inform the Chinese that since all attempts at negotiations had failed the British were going to assert their right to the corner of Sikkim which the Tibetans had occupied. Indeed, the Political Officer in Sikkim, J. C. White, had already gone to Giaogong—the place in question—with a small military escort and evicted the Tibetans in a manner prescribed by Curzon in his despatch

of February 13, 1902. Whereupon Prince Ch'ing at the Tsungli Yamen lodged a mild protest with the British Ambassador in which he pointed out that when in the past outstanding issues had arisen between India and Tibet they were settled by mutual consultation. 'In the present case,' he complained, 'British officers appear to have led troops to the Tibetan frontier without any previous notice, and to have there broken down a barrier in the pass. Such action is liable to create misunderstanding among the ignorant Tibetans and give rise to trouble.'[77]

The Chinese, alarmed at this seemingly aggressive turn in British policy, went to considerable lengths to deny the rumours of a secret understanding under which Russia was to be given Tibet. Satow had expressed his concern to Prince Ch'ing on account of Tibet's geographical proximity to British India.[78] The Prince denied these stories which he attributed to newspaper gossip (news of the reported agreement had appeared in the *China Times* of 18 July, 1902) in the strongest terms. China had nothing to gain by handing Tibet over to another Power ; certainly it would not help her recover her lost rights in Manchuria. He realised the importance of Tibet as a buffer, and as his government was equally a friend of Russia and Great Britain it would not aid one at the expense of the other. According to a confidential Chinese source which in the past had provided valuable information to the British Ambassador, this very question was debated in the Grand Council and any question of offering Tibet to Russia had been firmly rejected.

Satow, as he made clear in a letter to Lansdowne[79] was not certain as to the genuineness of the document containing the alleged agreement between Russia and China. He suspected that if signed it was the work of a Manchu Prince, Jung Lu, and the Russian agent of the Russo-Chinese Bank. The Russians were up to mischief in Mongolia and their activities at Urga needed close observation. However, the only excuse for which they could claim an interest in Tibet was their numerous lamaist subjects, but of these Britain had many more, besides having her Indian empire in geographical contiguity to that country. The Ambassador was not inclined to treat very

seriously information emanating from Kang Yu Wei (the exiled Chinese reformer living in Darjeeling) and Captain Parr of the Chinese Customs Service at Yatung, two of the Government of India's informants. The third was the Nepalese Representative at Lhasa whose reports to Katmandu were passed on to the Viceroy by Chandra Shamsher. And possibly under the Prime Minister's direct or indirect influence, a bazaar rumour might have been given the weight of an established fact. It was, after all, hardly a secret that the Gurkhas yearned to settle scores with Lhasa unaided.

China anxiously awaited Britain's response to her denial. Sir Charles Scott, His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was approached by the Chinese Minister and asked anxiously whether Sir Ernest Satow could have credited as genuine the story of a secret Russo-Chinese understanding over Tibet. The British diplomatist replied that he 'did not think that Sir E. Satow attached much credit to it, and probably regarded it as a '*ballon d'essai*' started in non-official Russian quarters, but that the text had undoubtedly been circulated and had reached the Indian Government and that the Chinese Government would no doubt be able to satisfy themselves that the Indian Government would certainly not be indifferent to any alteration in the present relations of a country so near to their frontiers as Tibet.'[80]

In December news arrived in London that Peking had appointed a new Amban, Yu Tai, who had previously seen service in Mongolia and Sinkiang, and was empowered to proceed at once to his new post so as to commence negotiations with White, whom the Chinese hoped would be given similar instructions by his superiors in India.

Irrespective of Satow's views in Peking, Curzon expressed himself a 'firm believer in the existence of a secret understanding if not a secret treaty, between Russia and China about Tibet ; '[81] a game which he was determined to frustrate while he had time. The recent action on the Sikkim border had had a salutary effect on both Lhasa and Peking who, once again, began talking of negotiations. Their subsequent silence was

merely the result of Russian tutoring. The Viceroy finally displayed his hand :

> My idea therefore, is that we should let the Chinese and Tibetans play the game of procrastination for some time longer, and should then say—as it is clear that they do not mean business—that we propose to send a mission up to negotiate a new treaty in the spring. This would be a reversion to the policy of Lansdowne [he meant Dufferin] at the time of the Macaulay mission, from which the Government of India of the day, in deference to the protests of China, were as I think, wrongly induced to depart. But on the present occasion I would not on any ground withdraw the mission. I would inform China and Tibet that it was going, and go it should. It would be a pacific mission intended to conclude a treaty of friendship and trade with the Tibetan Government. But it would be accompanied by a sufficient force to ensure its safety. We might even get the Nepalese to join in providing the escort. They would be delighted, for they are itching to have a go at Tibet themselves.[82]

The extract of this private letter to Hamilton was placed before the Political Committee of the India Office, where Lee-Warner voiced grave reservations. The mission might meet with resistance and in order to save face Britain would have to use force. The Chinese could be joined in a chorus of protest by the Russians and Tibetans. Then having got to Lhasa 'how can we make the horse drink as well as lead him to the water, how in other words can we secure a treaty of friendship : and what is the friendship worth that is secured by force ?'[83] There were troubles aplenty on the North West frontier, so why not be patient ? Once again Lee-Warner counselled the use of the Nepalese. Nepal had treaty relations with Tibet and could legitimately ask Lhasa for an explanation of its position. Should Tibet admit a relationship with Russia, Britain could join Nepal in denouncing it on the spot.

The Chinese warning to Tibet relaying Britain's concern had been ineffectual as China had lost most of her power there. Nepal on the other hand had representatives in Lhasa who could deliver a message directly to the Tibetan authorities. Should this course of action prove barren it would, as a last resort, be

advisable to 'slip Nepal at Tibet' ; and if Tibet resisted Britain could move in at once, instead of waiting till next spring, and giving Russia the breathing spell she required.

This was the first sign of the gulf that was to emerge between Calcutta and London on the Viceroy's Tibetan policy. A spirit of unease, if not of outright disapproval at the way British foreign policy was being defined and administered, informed much of Curzon's correspondence with Hamilton ; he had occasionally shared his thoughts with Brodrick, an old and trusted friend from his Eton and Balliol days. The Viceroy was not sure that politicians in London knew much about India, appreciated its true significance in the maintenance of British supremacy in the world or cared deeply about Indian interests. He resented the casual, off-hand manner in which India was treated—for instance, at the Coronation of Edward VII Indian guests were even expected to pay their own expenses —so resentful was he that he appealed directly to the King and to Balfour, Salisbury's political heir and successor. Addressing the latter, he wrote :

> You have no conception of the impression produced by such an act of shabbiness in this country. It will rankle in the minds of the people and be quoted by them in the Vernacular press for generations.·· India has served you well during the past three years. She has saved Natal for you. She fought your battles in China. She has accommodated 9000 of your Boer prisoners...(yet) the late Prime Minister of England has never said one word—in public or in private—in acknowledgement of this great service.'[84]

The tone of the Viceroy's letters betrayed a feeling of injured pride which the new Prime Minister with commendable speed endeavoured to soothe.[85] The trouble seemed to pass but relations between India and the Home authorities continued to simmer ; the tension only broken by the increasingly frequent thunderclaps of argument and recrimination.

Faced with the continued vacillation of the Home Government, Curzon was determined to force the pace. If his letter of 13 November 1902 contained a few ideas thrown out in the rough, his great despatch of 8 January 1903 contained an

able summary of the Tibetan problem to date, and a detailed exposition of the course of action he proposed to take in an endeavour to break the impasse.

In reply to the enquiry of the India Office on whether a Tibetan representative should be associated with the Chinese Resident Yu Tai at the talks on the Sikkim frontier, the Viceroy's despatch gave the following answers: First, that White had carried out his mission successfully, his action leading to a successful reassertion of British authority in the region. However, the greater advantage derived from this mission

> up to the present time consists in the fear inspired among the Tibetans that it is the prelude to some further movement —an advantage which would be wholly sacrificed when the discovery was made that no such consequence was likely to ensue. If, therefore, we now enter upon negotiations with no other ground than the successful reassertion of our authority on a very inconspicuous section of the border, it does not appear that there is much reason for anticipating a more favourable solution of the Tibetan problem than has attended our previous efforts, unless, indeed, we are prepared to assume a minatory tone and to threaten Tibet with further advance if the political and commercial relations between us are allowed any longer to be reduced to a nullity by her policy of inaction.[86]

The second major development impinging upon the present situation was the reported secret agreement between Russia and China.

> Whether this Agreement has been concluded with or without the knowledge of the Chinese Government, whether their agency has been introduced into or has been excluded from the negotiations, whether the Agreement is of a religious or commercial or political character, or a combination of all three—we entertain no shadow of doubt that some sort of agreement is in existence and that the powers of intervention which Russia has thereby acquired, however ingeniously concealed, or however kept in reserve, are intended to be used and, unless counteracted, will be used to the detriment of British interests in Tibet.[87]

The British Chargé d'Affaires at St Petersburg, Charles Hardinge, had informed the Foreign Office of his belief in the existence of a tacit agreement which would permit the Russian

Government to maintain a consular official in Tibet. The official in question had delayed his departure for fear of arousing suspicion ; his place in the meantime would be taken by a secret agent, who, according to the Government of India, might have already set out for his destination.

Thus, the forthcoming negotiations on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier, Curzon urged, were

> invested with more than a local importance, and that what we are concerned to examine is not the mere settlement of a border dispute or even the amelioration of our future trading relations with Tibet, but the question of our entire future political relations with that country and the degree to which we can permit the influence of another great power—and that power Russia—to bee xercised for the first time in Tibetan affairs.[88]

Russia had no overriding reason for interesting herself in Tibet ; her nearest territory was 1000 miles from Lhasa which was situated in the extreme south of the country and in close proximity to India.

> We are of opinion that the only way in which to counteract the danger by which we regard British interests as directly threatened in Tibet, is to assume the initiative ourselves, and to anticipate the arrival of a Russian Mission at Lhasa by being first upon the scene, and we regard the Chinese proposals for a conference as affording an excellent opportunity for pressing forward and carrying out this policy. We are in favour, subject to a qualification...of accepting the Chinese proposals, but of attaching to them the condition that the conference shall take place not upon our frontier, but at Lhasa, and that it shall be attended by a Tibetan representative who shall participate in the proceedings. In this way alone does it appear to us that we shall escape the ignominious position of having an Agreement which has been formally concluded with the Chinese subsequently repudiated by the Tibetans ; and in no other way do we regard it as in the least likely that the wall of Tibetan impassivity will be broken down."[89]

The Government of India drew attention to the Colman Macaulay Mission of 1886 and, in their view, the erroneous abandonment of that venture for purely extraneous reasons. The revival of such an enterprise and the firm policy on which it

was based was now called for—but not through the agency of China which had invariably proved a failure.

> We regard the so-called Suzerainty of China over Tibet as a constitutional fiction—a political affectation which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties. China is always ready to break down the barriers of ignorance and obstruction and to open Tibet to the civilising influence of trade ; but her pious wishes are defeated by the short-sighted stupidity of the Lamas. In the same way Tibet is only too anxious to meet our advances, but she is prevented from so doing by the despotic veto of the suzerain. This solemn farce has been re-enacted with a frequency that seems never to deprive it of its attractions or its power to impose.[91]

Even if the Home Government decided to accept the interposition of China any agreement must be signed or confirmed by a Tibetan representative.

> We may remark that there are, in the present circumstances of Tibet, special reasons for insisting that Tibet herself shall be a prominent party to any new Agreement. For the first time for nearly a century that country is under the rule of a Dalai Lama, who is neither an infant nor a puppet, but a young man, some twenty-eight years of age, who, having successfully escaped from the vicissitudes of childhood, is believed to exercise a greater personal authority than any of his predecessors, and to be *de facto* as well as *de jure* sovereign of the country. In other words, there is for the first time in modern history a ruler in Tibet with whom it is possible to deal instead of an obscure junta masked by the Chinese Amban.[92]

It was proposed, therefore, that commencing in the following spring

> negotiations should cover not merely the small question of the Sikkim frontier, but the entire question of our future relations, commercial and otherwise, with Tibet, and we think that they should culminate in the appointment of a permanent British representative Consular or Diplomatic, to reside at Lhasa.[93]

In view of possible opposition the mission should be accompanied by an armed escort. However, no serious campaign was envisaged as Tibetan military strength was minimal, but it would be unwise to run any risks in case arms from Russian Central Asia were reaching Lhasa.

> China and Tibet should be given emphatic assurances that the mission was of an exclusively commercial character, that we repudiated all designs of a political nature upon Tibet, that we had no desire to declare a Protectorate or permanently to occupy any portion of the country, but that our intentions were confined to removing the embargo that at present rests upon all trade between Tibet and India, and to establishing those amicable relations and means of communication that ought to subsist between adjacent and friendly Powers.'[94]

The despatch ended on the role of Nepal. Far from regarding any action by the Government of India with disquiet or suspicion, the Nepalese welcomed the attempt to thwart Russian designs in Tibet. India contemplated working in close cooperation with Nepal, who 'might be encouraged to send a separate column accompanied by British Officers, by an independent route into Tibet.'[95] As proof of Nepalese cordiality the Government appended a Note of an interview between the Viceroy and Chandra Shamsher at Delhi. The Nepalese Prime Minister pointed out that his country's last war with Tibet had cost Rs. 36 lakhs* and that the Durbar had accepted the paltry sum of Rs. 10,000 a year from Lhasa as part of the settlement because they did not feel able to continue operations. But the prospect of an armed (and by implication a strong) Tibet was too great a danger to Nepal to be accepted with equanimity.

This passage merely highlights the central place occupied by Nepal in the political considerations of British India's trans-Himalayan policies. Even the threat of a Russian presence in Tibet was a double-edged one ; for while such a prospect was regarded with obvious distaste by the Nepalese it could also, on the other hand, tempt them to utilise it to escape the fetters of British control. And what was an implied theme in this despatch was explicitly stated by Curzon in a later letter to Hamilton : 'There would,' he said, 'at once be set up a source of possible intrigue between Russia and Nepal, which might come to nothing as long as there was a strong Anglophile, like the present Prime Minister, at Khatmandu,

*One lakh is the Indian equivalent of 100,000.

but which in different circumstances might lead to a reproduction in Nepal of the same intrigues that preceded the Burnes' Mission in 1838, and that brought on the last Afghan War in 1878 to 1880.'[96]

To return, however, to Curzon's despatch. It has been quoted at length because it remains one of the two most important documents in the history of Anglo-Tibetan relations of the period. It was also the most eloquent expression of Anglo-Indian opinion : all the memoranda, the Notes and the Minutes of White, O'Connor, Kennion and a host of kindred spirits ; all the editorials of the Anglo-Indian Press found just reflection in its content and spirit ; but the finished article—a State paper fit to rank with the finest—bore the unmistakable stamp of a superior hand, that of the Viceroy himself. In Curzon, the men of the Forward School on India's north eastern frontiers had found their truest champion and prophet.

The India Office received Curzon's despatch with some uneasiness. Sir Steuart Bayley, Chairman of its Political Committee, noted that the Viceroy had made no mention of the possible diffiiculties that might possibly confront the mission on its journey to Lhasa. The nature of the terrain, the immense altitude, were questions that had to be borne in mind. Curzon also seemed to assume that once in Lhasa things would proceed smoothly and a satisfactory agreement signed. As the Dalai Lama was almost certain to flee his capital should the British force set off after him, or, should they help construct an alternative government ? Curzon had disavowed any intention of establishing a protectorate, only insisting on the presence of a British Resident at Lhasa. Yet by the same token Russia could demand a similar privilege and the powers would be back where they started. Sir Steuert also was haunted by the memory of Afghanistan. 'The possibility,' he wrote, 'of our Resident and escort suffering the fate of Cavagnari cannot be forced out of sight, and it seems only too possible that we should in the end be forced to declare a protectorate and maintain a garrison at Lhassa.' However, in spite of these misgivings he expressed his support of Curzon's

scheme because Russian influence, if established at Lhasa, 'would be an intolerable menace and would be disastrous to our relations not only with Sikkim, which is of small importance, but with Nepal, which is of the very highest importance.'[97]

Lee-Warner repeated himself along previous lines.[98] For him Nepal had long been the heart of the matter; he still favoured the use of her representatives at Lhasa in the pursuit of Britain's diplomatic ends as he feared the possibility of an armed conflict.

Nor was Hamilton easier in mind. It was possible, he thought, that there was some secret understanding between Russia and Tibet. To therefore wait upon events was dangerous. Assuming the correctness of this, 'Can we,' he questioned, 'establish a good international case for the action you suggest?'[99] It echoed the doubts of the Cabinet where, not surprisingly, Curzon's proposal was to find little favour. Nevertheless, Hamilton stood by the Viceroy. He attempted to marshal his forces by arranging a meeting which included the Prime Minister, the Duke of Devonshire, Leader of the House of Lords and Chairman of the Public Defence Committee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lansdowne, and members of his council at the India Office, in order to discuss the whole question before it was finally put before the Cabinet.[100]

The Secretary of State began the proceedings by pointing out,

> that our power in India was largely based on prestige, and that, if the Russian flag was established at Lhasa with a permanent agent, and it became known that all British efforts to open communications with the Lhasa authorities had been treated with contumely and insult a most unfortunate impression would be created throughout the northern part of India which he did not think could be counteracted by any subsequent action which we might take.[101]

He emphasised the military advantages enjoyed by the British: 'We had an overwhelming superiority of force in the locality, and all that we therefore required was backing up elsewhere by Imperial prestige and power.'[102] It was not for want of effort that Hamilton failed to carry his colleagues for,

> They evidently, looking at Great Britain's interests in other parts of the world, were very reluctant to give their acquiescence to any movement which, even though it might succeed in the locality where it was initiated, would raise in other parts of the world international complications and embarrassments, or lead to Russia retaliating in other parts of Asia, where her influence and material forces are stronger than our own.[103]

Indeed, Balfour observed that as Tibet was part of the Chinese Empire the action proposed by Curzon would be widely interpreted abroad as an attack on the integrity of China.

If the Home Government placed a declining premium on the Russian threat, their reasons were not far to seek. Reporting on Witte's budget of 1902 from St Petersburg, Charles Hardinge noted serious weaknesses in Russia's economy and her acute dependence on the West European money markets. The country would therefore be taking a considerable risk in involving itself in a premature war.[104] It was an assessment that was well received by his superiors in London. 'Lord Lansdowne,' wrote Sir T. Sanderson, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, 'was relieved to hear your prognostications as to their requiring more money, for the condition of Russian finance is a very important element in calculating what we have to meet in the way of international complications.'[105]

At the end of the year lingering fumes of suspicion still clouded relations between London and St Petersburg, for Hardinge reported in November that he was 'quite certain that the Russian expedition to Thibet and their coquetting with a Thibetan mission here were not in pursuit of science or religion but of a practical and political object.'[106] Sanderson acknowledged that 'some hanky panky was going on in that direction.'[107]

Lansdowne, as Foreign Secretary, pointed out for his part that the Russians had been asked to clarify their intentions on Tibet. To move before he had received their reply would be sharp practice. However, if it did emerge that Russia had an agreement under which she was empowered to send an agent to Lhasa the situation would be radically altered. But short of

some gross insult offered to the Brltish flag or to British honour, the general view was against precipitate action.[108]

The way was now clear for Hamilton's despatch of 27 February, 1903. This was the second key document of the time: an able summary of the major arguments against Curzon. It accepted the strategic importance of Tibet for India's northern frontier, particularly on the crucial position of Nepal. It also agreed that the time had come to adopt stronger measures. But the Home Government could not accept the need for an armed mission to Lhasa, or to stationing a British Resident there. Such action might no doubt be justified had the matter concerned India and Tibet alone. This, however, was not the case for,

> The position of China, in its relations to the powers of Europe, has been so modified in recent years that it is necessary to take into account those altered conditions in deciding on action affecting what must still be regarded as a province of China. It is true, as stated in the twenty-sixth paragraph of Your Excellency's letter, that we have no desire either to declare a Protectorate or permanently to occupy any portion of the country. Measures of this kind might, however, become inevitable if we were once to find ourselves committed to armed intervention in Tibet, and it is almost certain that, were the British mission to encounter opposition, questions would be raised which would have to be considered, not as local ones concerning Tibet and India exclusively, but from an international point of view, as involving the status of a portion of the Chinese Empire. For these reasons His Majesty's Government think it necessary, before sanctioning a course which might be regarded as an attack on the integrity of the Chinese Empire, to be sure that such action can be justified by the previous action of Tibet and Russia, and they have accordingly come to the conclusion that it would be premature to adopt measures so likely to precipitate a crisis in the affairs of Tibet as those which Your Excellency has proposed.[109]

Meanwhile the Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff, had called at the Foreign Office and made known his Government's concern at British action on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Lansdowne, in reply, pointed out that 'the Chumbi Valley was immediately contiguous to the Indian frontier, and had been

constantly used as a trade route between India and Tibet. There had been a dispute as to some boundary pillars erected in the neighbourhood, and we had been obliged to send an officer to insist on their re-erection.'[110] Benckendorff expressed the view that exaggerated rumours were being spread in order to create ill-feeling between Russia and Great Britain but affirmed that his country had no political designs on Tibet. The Foreign Secretary on his part responded thus :

> I said that if I were invited to say that we had no desire to annex Tibetan territory, I should unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative, but was bound to be careful how I gave general assurances as to our future relations with Tibet, the import of which might hereafter be called in question.[111]

In another meeting with the Russian Ambassador, a week later, he remarked that the Government of India's interest in Tibet was of a special character.

> With a map of Central Asia before me I pointed out to His Excellency that Lhassa was within a comparatively short distance of the northern frontier of India. It was, on the other hand, considerably over 1000 miles distant from the Asiatic possessions of Russia, and any sudden display of Russian interest or activity in the regions immediately adjoining the possessions of Great Britain could scarcely fail to have a disturbing effect upon the population or to create the impression that British influence was receding and that of Russia making rapid advances into regions which had hitherto been regarded as altogether outside of her sphere of influence.[112]

Lansdowne told the Ambassador that trustworthy sources would have him believe that Russia had recently concluded agreements providing for the establishment of a protectorate over Tibet and for the stationing of consular officials at Lhasa. Benckendorff denied this, but in order to satisfy the Foreign Secretary, offered to have this denial officially confirmed by his Government. Lansdowne accepted, closing the meeting with a warning : 'I went on to say,' he said, 'that, as we were much more closely interested than Russia in Tibet, it followed that, should there be any display of Russian activity in that country, we should be obliged to reply by a display of activity not only

equivalent to, but exceeding that made by Russia. If they sent a mission or an expendition we should have to do the same, but in greater strength.[113]

While these discussions were in progress the Chinese official, Ho-Kwang-Si, asked White to meet him at the Tibetan frontier town of Yatung for talks on all outstanding frontier problems. The Home Government felt that India, when expressing its readiness to commence negotiations should insist that a Tibetan with full powers be a party to these negotiations, and state that the time and place of such a conference was under the Viceroy's consideration.

Curzon was later to give, in the pursuit of his own policy, an unexpected twist to this last suggestion ; one that caused further unease and resentment among his colleagues at home.

On 8 April 1903, Lansdowne informed Scott that Benckendorff had called at the Foreign Office having been instructed by his Government to deny reports of a Russian plot to send a mission or agents into Tibet. Lamsdorf, the Russian Foreign Minister, had expressed astonishment that such rumours were given credence by Whitehall. However, while making this disclaimer Benckendorff emphasised that his country could not remain indifferent to any change in the status quo of Tibet, which his Government regarded as being 'a part of the Chinese Empire in the integrity of which they took an interest.'[114] Lansdowne, although reiterating that Britain had no intention of setting up a protectorate at Lhasa or permanently occupying any part of Tibet concluded by observing

> that it seemed to me that in cases of this kind where an uncivilized country adjoined the possessions of a civilized power, it was inevitable that the latter should exercise a certain amount of local predominance. Such a predominance, as I had before explained to him, belonged to us in Tibet. But it did not follow from this that we had any design upon the independence of the country.[115]

By the middle of April (1903) Curzon was ready to open negotiations with the Chinese. The Amban, Yu Tai, had accredited Ho-Kwang-Si and Captain Parr of the Imperial Customs Service as China's official representatives. They in

turn informed the Viceroy that should Yatung be an unacceptable venue for the talks they were prepared to consider an alternative site. (It was a place in India that was uppermost in their minds). The offer presented Curzon with a heaven-sent opportunity which he readily seized. It was the Home Government who, in the first instance, asked him to reserve the right to consider the time and place for negotiations, though without foreseeing its consequences, and now the Chinese quite unsuspectingly were doing the same. 'I propose accordingly,' he remarked to the Secretary of State,

> to invite the Amban to depute Chinese delegates who should be accompanied by a duly accredited Tibetan representative at Khambajong, which is the nearest inhabited place to the frontier in dispute, near Giagong. I propose that our representative, with an escort of 200 men, should proceed to that place while reinforcements are held in Sikkim, and that, should the Chinese and Tibetan representatives fail to appear, or should the former come without the latter, he should move forward to Shigatse or Gyantse, in order that the arrival of the deputation from Lhasa might be accelerated.[116]

The die was cast. An incursion into Khambajong was to become the first step on the road to Lhasa. Strong and masterful, the Viceroy had with considerable guile succeeded in presenting the Home Government with an apparent *fait accompli*.

Hamilton approved the move to Khambajong but added that any further advance would require the Cabinet's sanction. Having got the bit between his teeth Curzon began raising his sights. He proposed in a telegram to the Secretary of State that negotiations should not be confined to frontier and grazing disputes but extended to 'general and trade relations between India and Tibet with special reference to the duty on tea and to the ten percent duty levied at Phari on trade in transit.'[117] And since Yatung as a trade mart had proved unsatisfactory, Phari could hardly be expected to do better. However, Gyantse, which lay astride the main route from Shigatse and Lhasa should prove an admirable alternative. Nonetheless, to ensure that fair trading practices were being observed it would be

desirable to station a British Resident at Lhasa, or if the Home Government disapproved, he could reside instead at Gyantse. There would have to be an insistence on direct communications between the British and the Tibetans, with the threat to march on Lhasa kept in reserve, should the latter prove intractable.

> Further, it will be necessary to secure for British Indian subjects the same freedom of trade and travel in Tibet as is enjoyed by Kashmiris and Nepalese; and to insist that all British subjects duly authorised by us should be allowed to proceed by recognised routes to Gyantse, beyond which a pass would be required but in case of a request being preferred by the Government of India the pass should not be refused.[118]

The head of the mission was to be Major Francis Younghusband who would receive the temporary rank of Colonel and the official designation of Frontier Commissioner. Traveller, explorer, soldier and mystic, he shared with his chief an unshakeable belief in Britain's manifold destiny in the East; like him he had an abiding suspicion of Russia and a stubborn dislike of France. The Viceroy had found his perfect alter ego. Curzon recommended Younghusband on the ground that, 'he knows Orientals generally, and the Chinese in particular by heart, and he will be able to hold his own with continued firmness and good temper against the tortuous tactics with which he will no doubt be confronted.'[119]

The Secretary of State while expressing general support for Curzon's measures wanted to know whether he had any proposals if the Tibetans refused to accede to the Government of India's terms concerning Gyantse. His official telegram was necessarily laconic but he was more candid in his private letter. He pointed out that Benckendorff's official denial of Russian intrigues meant that Russia had agreed to give Britain a free hand in Tibet provided she stopped short of a protectorate or annexation. The mood in London had since then changed markedly, 'There is,' remarked Hamilton, 'very great reluctance here entertained, I am afraid, by the whole of the Council to the idea of our locating an agent at Lhasa, or making any

forcible demonstration in the direction of that capital ; and now that the rumoured advance of Russia is removed, I shall have great difficulty in inducing the Council to approve of any expedition or expenditure which under the Act may require their sanction.'[120]

What were the alternative courses of action to which Hamilton had referred ? Curzon mentioned two, both of which he proceeded to dismiss. The first was to block the trade routes and exclude all Tibetans from British India. The second would entail an occupation of the Chumbi Valley. To institute a commercial blockade would be self-defeating, since it would hurt traders from British India as much as it would the Tibetans. The occupation of the Chumbi Valley would amount to an 'armed advance of a minor degree.'[121] And with the apprehension of the Cabinet running so high it was a course of action with liitle to commend it.

The Secretary of State in his telegram of 28 May 1903 made known the Cabinet's alarm at recent developments. While sanctioning the advance to Khambajong they asked to be kept informed of the progress of the negotiations. In their view the Russian bogy had been laid to rest thanks to the firm assurances given to the Foreign Office by the Russian Ambassador, while Indo-Tibetan commerce was barely worth the trouble.

Hamilton followed up his official telegram with a private letter in which he remarked sympathetically

> that this reluctance on the part of the Cabinet to acquiesce in your scheme for asserting our political influence in Tibet for the future on the foundation of extended trade operations will be annoying to you... but, if they are frightened, their alarm as to our intentions is still an instrument which, if judiciously used, will enable you to extract a good deal from them. And should the Tibetans prove obstructive, and negotiations break down we must express our disapproval, and that disapproval can but take the shape, with little inconvenience and certainly no risk of future complications, of either a blockade or of the occupation of the Chumbi Valley.[122]

Being almost an enclave in British territory this could be effected without difficulty. Nor could it give Russia a pretext for

further aggression in Manchuria. The Secretary of State was himself caught in a cleft stick. 'The truth is, my dear George,' he warned a couple of months later,

> that, if there were two more of you in other parts of the British Empire occupying big posts, the machine would not be manageable. You are a very big Proconsul in India, Milner is a big but a lessor Proconsul in South Africa. We let him push things to extremities, and we know the result; and although I quite admit that there are occasions on which we ought to risk everything for the attainment of our object, they are few and far between, and we cannot afford, looking to the dispersed nature of our interests, and to the manner in which we cross the aspirations of almost every great European Power, to adopt a truculent and intolerant tone upon every difference which may arise. At the same time I agree with you that it was a pity that the Cabinet did not allow you a free hand in Tibet.[123]

Hamilton's letter with its ambivalence of tone and content did nothing to smoothen the difficulties between Curzon and the Home Government. A firm and irrevocable decision to proceed immediately to Gyantse or to Lhasa, or one that strictly forbade the Viceroy to move beyond the Sikkimese border, or at best no further than Khambajong, would have saved a great deal of toil and resentment on both sides. As it was the affair dragged on, allowing the seeds of a self-destructive controversy to bear fruit. By trying simultaneously to be true to two conflicting positions Hamilton merely widened the breach. Curzon took his advice very much to heart. Each step into Tibet was made to the accompaniment of shrill cries on the imminence of the Russian threat; the supply of Russian arms to Lhasa, the viciousness and cruelty of the monks (and remembering the Cabinet's previous reluctance to move unless a gratuitous insult were offered to British honour or to the British flag), the gaoling of two British subjects and the consequent loss of British prestige if the act were allowed to go unpunished. It was like a tug of war, with the Cabinet giving way a little at a time to the unceasing pressure of their imperious Viceroy.

The Government of India had in the meantime sent Younghusband his instructions.[124] He was to try and secure

as many commercial privileges as possible. He was to persuade get the Tibetans to agree to a trade mart at Gyantse, first, because it lay astride the important route from Shigatse to Lhasa ; and second, because it would enable the British to undermine the economic power of the Tomos of the Chumbi Valley whose main place of business was at Phari, and who enjoyed a monopoly of the carrying trade to Kalimpong. While the instructions were clear that Younghusband should not press for a Political Agent either at Gyantse or Lhasa, the Frontier Commissioner was to endeavour to get Regulations 1 and 2 of the 1893 Regulations applied to the former. As both these clauses were designed to ensure that the Indian Government could send their officers to watch over the conditions of trade at Yatung, it was now sought to transfer this right to Gyantse. It was also hoped that Article 6 of the 1890 Convention which allowed for free and direct communication between India and Lhasa could be revised so that a situation whereby a letter from the Viceroy to the Dalai Lama was returned unopened would never occur again.

Younghusband himself wrote a 'Note on Russian Efforts to Reach Lhasa',[125] in which he recounted how explorers like Prejavalsky, Pieotsof, Robarofsky and Kozloff had been turned back at the Tibetan frontier. However, the recent crop of visitors to and from Tibet were Mongolians.

> Now the Mongolian Lamas are very possibly and probably not officially accredited agents to the Chinese and Tibetan officials in the same way as I now am : and the Russian Government may officially be unaware of their very existence. At the same time it is not altogether impossible that they have been used by the Russian Government as a medium for preliminary informal communications with the Tibetans in much the same way as the Government of India have used the Bhutanese Vakil Ugyen Kazi.[126]

Remembering Ugyen Kazi's lack of success, one would have thought the Frontier Commissioner had little to fear on this account, but for the question of prestige which seemed to lurk behind every imperial problem. For even supposing that the Russians had no knowledge of or connection with these men,

argued Younghusband, neither the Chinese nor the Tibetans would find this very credible after the Tsar's private audience at Livadia. The simple Tibetans would be taken in by exaggerated stories of Russian strength, which both they and their Chinese suzerains would believe could be used to

> put pressure on us in a dispute over a small piece of ground several hundreds of miles nearer to Calcutta than this place Simla itself is··· another feature of these transactions···should not be passed without notice. It is the way in which these innocent geographers and pious pilgrims have sought the aid and protection not of the only European Power whose frontiers march with Tibet but of that Power with whom Russia is in alliance : and who is suspected of an intention to join hands with Russia north and south across Asia through Yunnan and Tibet just as she had tried to join hands with the same Power east and west across Africa through Fashoda and Abyssinia.[127]

The British force led by J. C. White, and including Captain O'Connor, Major Bretherton and the military escort reached Khambajong on 7 July, 1903. The Tibetans and Chinese having failed in their pleas to the intruding force to stop and negotiate at the frontier refused further discussions. To break this stalemate the Viceroy proposed yet another advance, which he pressed the Home Government to sanction without delay or else, from November, climatic factors would intervene and put back the departure of the mission to the following spring ; 'a delay most injurious to our prestige'[128] whose main result would be only to postpone, not solve the problem.

To the head of the Indian Foreign Department, H. S, Barnes, he voiced his fears :

> Nothing is being done with Tibet. They are obstructive and insolent to the last degree and not until we move forward will any progress be made. But will a tottering Home Government even commit themselves to this ?[129]

In the middle of September 1903 a major Cabinet reshuffle took place. Hamilton, who had worked well in harness with Curzon, was replaced by St. John Brodrick. The new Secretary of State for India had long been one of the Viceroy's closest friends ; and in the light of the later events which were

to mar this friendship, it is perhaps fair to recall Brodrick's warm congratulatory letter to Curzon on his Indian appointment:

> Except your wife I doubt if anyone would have been more distressed if it had not come to you ... I cannot doubt you will make your Viceroyalty memorable if not unique. You have knowledge, energy, talent and resolution in a degree I think never previously combined in the history of India.[130]

But even while Brodrick was at the War Office there was the occasional hint of the dark shadows that were to come between them. Only a month before succeeding Hamilton, Curzon had occasion to complain at the cavalier way in which the War Office was treating the Indian Government who are:

> ordered to do this or that as though they were the Board of Trade or Agriculture or some similar institution. Neither do you seem to set any count upon public opinion in India. Even the India Office does not realise that India is changing every day: that public opinion is educated and articulate and that the old tyrannies and jobs that used to be perpetuated at the expense of India are no longer capable of repetition ... Doubts are steadily building up in India viz that India is always to be treated from the selfish and Shylock point of view by the people at home and that it is to the Viceroy alone that she can look for defence of her interests. This puts the Viceroy into a position of quasi antagonism to the Government at home of which you are always telling me that he is a colleague though it is a strange sort of colleague that is only consulted after the decision has been taken.[131]

Brodrick defended himself from this reproach by pointing out that Curzon's advocacy of a vigorous external policy was not adequately backed up by Indian contributions to imperial defence, quoting in justification Lord Salisbury's remark: 'Curzon always wants me to negotiate as if I had 200,000 men at my back.'[132] Curzon did not take kindly to the charge: 'I protest against a policy of compromise and surrender all round our frontiers,' he replied,

> because I hold it to be both unnecessary and fatal. But while the policy of His Majesty's Government has required for its execution from 10,000 to 30,000 of the Indian Army, ever since I have been in India, I am not aware that I have ever asked you for a single man of the 200,000 of whom Lord

> Salisbury spoke. On the contrary I have given you the first five years of unbroken peace that you have had in India for fifty years. I have so far managed Tibet which appears to His Majesty's Government to be an enterprise of imposing dimensions with a force of 500 men and would undertake to get to Lhasa with 2,000—neither of them operations which need strain the Empire to breaking point.[135]

The battle lines were, however, more firmly drawn in Curzon's first official letter to the new Secretary of State in which he dilated on the respective positions of the Viceroy, the Secretary of State, the India Office in London and the Indian Administration.

'The Secretary of State is,' he remarked, 'in my opinion the constitutional ally of the Viceroy. They are the joint heads of the Indian Administration, which may fairly be described as a duumvirate, complete save for its geographical bifurcation.'[134] The Indian Council seemed to have excessive powers, hence it was necessary for the Secretary of State to use his tact and influence to keep these under close control.

> India looks to her official representative to be her champion and to fight her battles in the Cabinet. She expects him to be the Secretary of State *for* [emphasis Curzon's] India in the strictest sense of the word. She pays his salary and that of everyone in the great office about him : and nothing causes warmer sentiment here than the idea that this huge and costly machinery is not always or exclusively devoted to her interests. Somebody once said that India would be lost on the floor of the House of Commons. I regard that prospect as much less imminent than it once was. In my opinion the two great dangers which British rule in India has to face, arise firstly from the racial pride and the undisciplined passions of the inferior class of Englishmen in the country, and secondly from the impression, should it ever gain substantial foothold in India, that injustice, neglect or indifference are shown to her cause by those who are governing her in London. It is better to make a stand for India and be beaten by your colleagues, than to make no stand at all.[135]

Balfour was to comment later that Curzon appeared to view the Secretary of State for India as his personal ambassador to the Court of St James. Be that as it may Brodrick sanctioned the advance sought by the Viceroy, but only in the eventuality of

negotiations with the Tibetans breaking down.[136] Meanwhile, in Peking, Satow having impressed on the Chinese the seriousness of the situation, was advised to be patient. All would be well, they assured him, once the Amban had taken up his post at Lhasa.

The British Ambassador was told that he had been held up at Chengtu for want of an escort with which to overawe the Tibetans. In the present situation there was little that China could do, in Satow's view, to bring her dependency to heel. When it is remembered that the Amban's appointment had been announced in December 1902, and that despite of the Chinese Government's previous assurance that he would be in the Tibetan capital by the following June he had still not arrived, it was hardly surprising that this latest expression of hope from Peking was greeted with scorn by Curzon.

The Viceroy, delighted at having got Brodrick's approval, expressed his warm satisfaction in a lengthy postscript to his letter of 2 October which he had delayed sending. The situation in Tibet was fairly simple. The ordinary people of the country were an amicable and inoffensive lot who had no objection to relations with the British ;

> but they are ruled by an ignorant hierarchy of monks, whose continued monopoly of all power and substance in the country depends upon the exclusion of any alien influence. China endows the principal monasteries and thereby keeps a hold on the ruling clique. But she is absolutely without power or authority in Tibet, and she is equally afraid of any outside shock that might expose the hollowness of her alleged suzerainty. I myself regard it as a mistake to have dealt with Tibet through China at all, and I should have preferred adhering to the policy which Lord Salisbury authorised when I came out to India viz to ignore China and try and get at the Dalai Lama.[137]

However, since the Home Government had decided to move in the matter through Peking, he welcomed their decision not to be duped by Chinese dilatoriness. And should Russia weigh in with a protest she should be given short shrift by Lansdowne, who could remind her Ambassador of his Government's action in Manchuria. In any case the present situation was of concern

only to Britain, China, and Tibet, and the present action was undertaken in defence of British rights :

> But the great point is to refrain from any admission that Russia has the smallest right of interference in a matter that concerns our frontier and is more than 1000 miles from theirs.[138]

Towards the end of October Curzon was complaining at the persistent obduracy of the Tibetans : the breakdown in communications which the Secretary of State had previously stated could be regarded as sufficient for a further advance into Tibet had arrived since

> They have turned back Nepalese Yaks on the frontier, and have now put an end to all our trade with Tibet·· We wish to represent the deplorable effect which would be produced by our acceptance of this humiliating position, (1) upon the Tibetans themselves, by whom our inactivity will be attributed to cowardice ; (2) upon Bhutan, (3) upon the Government of Nepal who have given us loyal support and have collected 500 yaks, ready for our use. Moreover, this policy will not obviate the necessity for an advance ultimately which we shall be obliged to carry out after a needless sacrifice of prestige and in circumstances of increased difficulty. Gyantse in our opinion will give the best winter quarters of the Mission, as supplies and communication there are cheaper and easier than at Khambajong, which has to be reached by a difficult route over a lofty pass. The climate, too, is better. A withdrawal would have most unfortunate results now that preparations, which of course are known, have advanced so far.[139]

From Khambajong Curzon had now set his sights on Gyantse ; it was but one more step on the fateful journey to Lhasa, The Home Government was under sustained pressure. Every telegram and despatch from India emphasised a different aspect of what was presented as an extremely grave situation. On one occasion the Tibetans were being drilled and armed by the Russians, on another, it was a case of prestige, on a third it was their scant regard for the usages of civilised conduct. It was to this theme that the Government of India now returned. In a despatch to the Secretary of State on 5 November, 1903, they observed that :

> the most conspicuous proof of the hostility of the Tibetan Government and of their contemptuous disregard for the usage of civilization has been the arrest of two British subjects from Lechung at Shigatse, whence they have been deported to Lhasa, and, it is credibly asserted have been tortured and killed ..... (but) ··· The attitude of the Tibetan Government is in no respect shared by the Tibetan people. The latter, instead of being suspicious or hostile, are, on the contrary, well-disposed and cheerful. The officers of the Commission in their wanderings in the neighbourhood of the camp at Khambajong have everywhere been treated with courtesy by the people, and Colonel Younghusband has established most friendly relations with the abbots and monks of the great monastery of Tashi Lumpo ···All these parties concur in attributing the antagonism of the Tibetan Government to the ascendancy of the monks at Lhasa, who fear that the intrusion of any foreign influence will be the beginning of the end of their long reign and whose attitude is exclusively reactionary.[140]

And then as if with an eye to the officials of the India Office, it was emphasised that a repetition of past mistakes would 'estrange the confidence of the Nepalese Durbar, who have sympathised with and loyally supported us on the present occasion.'[141] Faced with this veritable bombardment, the Secretary of State in an official telegram,[142] sanctioned the Mission's advance to Gyantse, but was careful to point out this should not presage in any form an occupation or a permanent interference in Tibetan affairs. The purpose of the advance was to obtain satisfaction, and once that had been gained, an immediate withdrawal should be effected.

But before this Brodrick in his letter of 29 October had fired a warning shot across Curzon's bows. While noting the latter's views on the constitutional and political role of the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and the India Council, Brodrick highlighted his difficulties with a Council and Cabinet that were not always in agreement with the Head of the Indian Government.

'The Cabinet,' wrote Brodrick,

> was most unfriendly to any advance into the Chumbi Valley, and will unquestionably want to know exactly where we are going to stop. Do not think I am adopting their comparison when I am explaining it. Lord Salisbury half a score of times

> in Africa stopped small expeditions. The moment he resigned, Cranborne rushed Lansdowne into the move into Somaliland which caused Swayne's disaster, and an expedition which has already amounted to £ 2,000,000. You will say, no doubt, that any comparison between these African troubles and the Tibet position is wholly inaccurate ; but so you would also probably feel as to the diplomatic use which the Prime Minister and others think will be made of any movement on our part to 'Manchurianise' Tibet.[143]

Neither the Council nor the Cabinet—barring one member—was ready to back the Government of India's forward policy.

The Secretary of State had correctly reflected the views of the Prime minister who had written to him only the day before expressing deep reservations about developments in Tibet. The cost of the expedition would fall on India and hence did not immediately concern the Home Government, remarked Balfour.

> 'But I strongly deprecate permanent entanglements in Tibet,' he continued, 'partly because I think we have as much on our hands as we can look after, partly because, if we 'Manchurianise' what is technically a part of the Chinese Empire, we may greatly weaken our diplomacy in the Far East.
>
> Again, who can yet say what the results of the Russo-Japanese negotiations are going to be ? If they break down, and if Japan goes to war, who is going to lay long odds that we are not at loggerheads with Russia within six months ? In that event, I should have supposed that any complications in Tibet, even on the small scale suggested by the Viceroy, might prove exceedingly embarrassing.....The perennial difficulty of governing the Empire lies in the fact rulers in its outlying positions have great local knowledge, but no responsibility and little thought for the general situation ; and we at home are reluctant to over-rule people on the spot who say and often with truth that their policy is the only one which will save bloodshed and money in the long run.
>
> I suppose we must assent to George Curzon's suggestion..... but I do so reluctantly.[144]

The members of the India Council were equally sceptical. Steuert Bayley in a minute observed :

> It seems to me too late to go back from the prescription given to the Government of India to prepare for an advance to Gyantse, but I think every endeavour should be made to

> prevent a further advance to Lhasa, and that Lord Curzon should be induced to content himself, if he can secure a treaty with a native (Buddhist) trade agent without an escort at Gyantse instead of an English resident at Lhasa.[145]

To Fitzpatrick, the needs of the situation, that is the saving of British honour and prestige, would be adequately met if the army marched hither and thither, thus demonstrating to the Tibetans that it had the power to do so. Of the Russian bogy, he was utterly sceptical. 'It must be remembered,' he commented, 'that the rumours about Russia, which were the real origin of the present embarrassing position, being now admitted on all hands to be unfounded, what is at stake is really not worth much of a fuss. The trade is quite small and not likely to increase to any extent worth speaking of.'[146] As for the imprisonment of the two British subjects, such incidents were constantly occurring in frontier areas. Nor was the Lhasa Government's refusal to treat with the British on Tibetan soil impelled by any desire to insult the Viceroy, but merely by a desire to be left alone. The risk of further involvement in Tibet by a European agent with an escort of 80-100 men could result in another Cavagnari affair. Neither did he see much merit in emphasising the friendliness of ordinary Tibetans in contrast to the hostility of a handful of lamas, for the experience of the frontier told him that any forward move would meet with united opposition. There was a cutting edge to Fitzpatrick's concluding observation :

> In dealing with questions of this sort we must always think of the day of trouble, which is bound to come sooner or later, and we must always remember that we have not, and can never have, an army sufficiently large to make us feel quite comfortable even as to the defence of all our existing responsibilities. Hence we must at all times give up the idea of doing things of a sort which we should otherwise think it desirable to do with a light heart. This of course is the most commonplace, but there are some people who needed to be reminded of it, and, much as I respect Lord Curzon, I feel he is one.[147]

Mackay's comments were more direct and pungent. 'In the first place, 'he observed,

> the trade with Tibet is scarcely worth any consideration and there is not the faintest prospect of it being worth anything to speak of even if free interchange of commodities were permitted. If therefore the idea is to make a demonstration in the Chumbi Valley and, if necessary, to march upon Lhasa with the object of forcing Tibet to carry out the commercial treaty made some years ago, I say unhesitatingly that the game is not worth the candle.
>
> It is absolutely nonsense to speak of loss of prestige if we do not promptly force Tibet to send a commissioner to meet Younghusband without another month's delay. The Thibetans as the Viceroy points out in his telegram are quite ignorant of our power and resources—and we can afford to laugh at their ignorance. A man does not lose prestige if when a small boy cheeks him in on the street he does not run after him and box his ears .....in my humble judgement it would be a crime to make an invasion of Thibet because the people are averse to carrying out a commercial treaty which is not worth six pence so far as the trade it will bring is concerned, and if this is the only excuse which we have to offer for invading the country– for the retention of two British subjects is I fancy all moonshine—we shall be rightly charged with a deliberate act of aggression which will involve us in serious outlay, lead to the loss of much life and may have far-reaching consequences, without any possibility of advantage to anyone.[148]

While Brodrick informed Curzon of the India Council's reservations, he particularly emphasised those of the Prime Minister himself. Balfour was worried at developments in the Far East. If Curzon's worst fears were confirmed, and Russia did send a consul to Lhasa, there was nothing to prevent Britain from doing likewise. Whereas if Britain moved first the Russians would expose her to great trouble over Manchuria, and also insist on having their own man at the Tibetan capital. It was recalled how difficult it had been to keep the Russians from sending an agent to Kabul ; there was a query on whether Tibet was in danger of turning into another Afghanistan.[149]

Curzon replied that Russia was on the verge of establishing a veiled protectorate in Tibet and it was the current British intervention that had prevented a major political disaster. A Russian presence at Lhasa about which the Cabinet seemed so

sanguine would be fraught with the most dangerous consequences for India. Even if Russia were to keep a relatively small force of 1000 men in the Tibetan capital,

> should not we require to place a corresponding or larger number in Sikkim, and what would be the effect produced upon the entire peoples of Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Upper Assam, and Bengal ?.....I venture to assert that the presence of Russia's influence of the northern frontier (from which it is now fortunately severed by 1200-1500 miles) would increase by 50 percent the alrerdy considerable difficulty of managing Bengal.[150]

To the argument that British action might provoke Russia to encroach on Chinese territory, the Viceroy observed with an undertone of irony that he was unaware that Britain had done anything to provoke Russian expansion in Manchuria in the first instance. Moreover, in view of Russia's current preoccupation with Japan she would hardly want to confront Britain.

Curzon accepted the Cabinet's anxiety that a British mission at Gyantse or Lhasa might produce a corresponding Russian demand,

> but I hope that it is one with which we should not comply, any more than Russia would comply with a request from us to place an officer at Khiva or Bokhara.....There are certain points of equality with Russia that we should not think of claiming in Mongolia of Manchuria, and the same ought to be the case the other way about in Tibet. Perhaps also the Cabinet, in considering the case of an Envoy at Lhasa, are alarmed at the memories of Kabul. But Lhasa is not in Afghanistan ; and Tibetan Lamas are not Pathans. However, I have no desire, unless driven to it by the Russians, to have a British Resident at Lhasa, or to entangle ourselves in the politics of Tibet. I have only two objects—to keep the Russians out...and to secure that our future trade relations with the Tibetans are unhampered. I think that for this purpose we shall require some sort of representative at Gyantse, just as we at present have the right to place such a man at Yatung.[151]

But despite Curzon's persuasiveness, by the end of 1903, the Home Government was determined to achieve an understanding with Russia, and on 1 January 1904, an outline of an

agreement between the two Powers was placed before the Cabinet. Afghanistan and Tibet, on account of their geographical position, were to be in the British sphere of influence, while Persia would be divided into two zones, Russia to predominate in the north and Britain in the south. Britain also undertook to recognise Russia's special rights as a limitrophe power in Manchuria, particularly in the Manchurian railway, while in return British treaty rights in all parts of China were to be respected and British trade was to receive equal treatment with those of other Powers.[152]

The Anglo-Indian Press were generally behind the Indian Government. The *Englishman's Overland Mail* in its editorial titled 'Forward' expressed the view that the best way to bring the Tibetans to heel was to insist upon having a British Resident at Lhasa. The stakes were extremely high for a Russian presence in Tibet would not only be severely detrimental to Britain's trade prospects in the Himalayas, but would weaken her strategic strength resulting in enormous increases in military estimates.

> We would perforce be obliged to maintain in Bengal an army of the size we have in the Punjab. And all to avoid, now, a little expenditure of money and energy which would, later, repay us tenfold both in trade and prestige.[153]

A fortnight later the same paper noted that Russia balked at the prospect of a conflict with Britain over Afghanistan, and would certainly be less inclined to fight over Tibet.

However, there was also the position of China whose suzerainty over Tibet Britain had recognised in 1888. Peking was also adept at playing off one power against another : this and the fact that India was fast being drawn into the vortex of European politics meant

> a projected movement into Tibet needs the previous exercise of every high quality of statesmanship. The matter is as much one for the statesman as for the soldier.[154]

Meanwhile the Chinese Minister in London had informed Lansdowne that the two British subjects (Sikkimese in actual fact) over whose imprisonment the Government of India had

taken such umbrage were alive and well and orders had gone out for their immediate release. Moreover, as the Amban in company with a Tibetan representative, whose appointment had been approved by the Dalai Lama, was proceeding to Yatung to meet with the British, the Chinese hoped that Younghusband would make no further move. Their wishes were of no avail for General Macdonald had already arrived at Phari with a column of infantry and much needed supplies.

In the middle of January (1904) Younghusband set up camp at Tuna, a short march from Guru where he came face to face with the Lhasa and Shigatese Generals. The Tibetans insisted that he return to Yatung where all outstanding issues could be discussed and settled. And in answer to the British Commissioner's question about their reported dealings with Russia,

> The Generals assured me that it was untrue that they had dealings with the Russians, and the monk brusquely intimated that they disliked them just as much as they did us. They protested that they had nothing to do with the Russians ; that there was no Russian near Lhasa at the present time ; and that Dorjieff was a Mangolian, and the custom of Mongolians was to make large presents to the monasteries ; and they asked me not to be so suspicious.[155]

Younghusband summed up the situation as follows : the military strength of the Tibetans was negligible ; their lay officials were less unfriendly to the British and more aware of British strength ; and that the only real obstacle before the mission was the priestly influence of the senior monks.

Towards the end of February (1904) he solicited the mediation of the Bhutanese envoy—the Tinpuk Jongpen—not in real hope of success but because 'the fact of his attempting to mediate might be the means of bringing the Bhutanese into closer relations with us.'[156]

The Lhasa delegates complained bitterly to the Bhutanese about the behaviour of the British, expressing doubts about their reported desire for a settlement. When Younghusband was asked where his Government wanted a trade mart, he replied that they had yet to make up their mind.[157] This was

less than the truth, for the Home Government in response to the pleas of India, had agreed that the Tibetans be asked to concede Gyantse. Could it be that the Commissioner's feigned ignorance was a ploy to buy time for himself and Curzon to pressure the authorities in London to sanction the advance on Lhasa ?

Meanwhile by the middle of March the British were preparing to move to Gyantse but the Tibetan force at Guru barred their way. The confrontation took place on 31 March 1904. Brigadier—General Macdonald, commander of the mission's military escort whose relations with Younghusband remained difficult and unhappy throughout the expedition, wished to commence firing immediately. The Frontier Commissioner, however, stayed his hand. He first asked the Tibetans to lay down their arms. Getting no response he ordered the British troops to advance on the mud fortifications behind which the Tibetans had taken up positions and eject them peacefully—which they proceeded to do

> in silence, and with something of the good-humoured severity that London policemen display on Boat Race Night..... At this point it looked as if the fantastic and perilous encounter had produced an absurd situation, but nothing worse. Officers were busy taking snapshots. Candler dismounted and, resting a notebook on his saddle, scribbled a short despatch to the *Daily Mail* reporting a bloodless victory ; Younghusband wrote a similar message to the Government of India and an orderly set off at full gallop for the end of the telegraph-line.[158]

The Tibetans had now to be disarmed ; but 'to disarm men,' as Peter Fleming remarked,

> without mutual agreement is possible only when they recognise that they have no alternative but to lay down their weapons. The Tibetan army had no alternative but did not recognise that fact. It had never seen a machine-gun before ; it understood only dimly how frightful was the menace of the Lee Metfords trained silently on the confined space, roughly an acre in extent, in which it was corralled ; and the superstitious peasants in its ranks were sustained by a sort of half-faith in the charms, spells and other mumbo-jumbo which were supposed to render them invulnerable. They were in a death-trap, but they did not know it.[159]

The Tibetans vigorously resisted all efforts to disarm them. Tension mounted. 'It was a ridiculous position,' observed Candler, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, 'Sikh and Mongol swaying backwards as they wrestled for the possession of swords and matchlocks.'[160] In the melée a Sikh tried to bar the way of the Lhasa General astride on his pony and was shot through the jaw.

There was instant firing. Volley upon volley was discharged into the massed ranks of Tibetans. The killing was frightful. Of a total force of 1500 the Tibetans in a matter of minutes had lost between 600—700 men, including the Lhasa General. The British force suffered a dozen casualties, none of them fatal. But the massacre left a deep and abiding impression. A young subaltern, Hadow by name, wrote home to his mother that night :

> I got so sick of the slaughter that I ceased fire, though the General's order was to make as big a bag as possible.....I hope I shall never have to shoot down men walking away again.[161]

His other compatriots were equally shaken, not least Francis Younghusband himself who said :

> I was so absolutely sick at that so-called fight I was quite out of sorts.[162]

This result was in a sense inevitable, given the fact that the Tibetans regarded the British as an invading force whom they were determined to resist, yet against whom they had nothing to offer but rusty matchlocks and broad swords.

But it was Candler's final observation that gave most food for thought :

> The Tibetans we are told, are not patriots. Politicians say that they want us in their country, that they are priest-ridden, and hate and fear the Lamas, What, then, drove them on ? It was certainly not fear. No people on earth have shown a greater contempt for death.[163]

Brodrick hoped this encounter would have taught the Tibetans a lesson and General Macdonald may have thought likewise as otherwise the carnage he inflicted on them became less justifiable. Such at any rate was Curzon's view.[164]

The authorities at Lhasa, however, showed no signs of yielding, and the British Mission having reached Gyantse seemed destined for an indefinite stay. The Chinese Amban had come out to meet it but as usual seemed quite powerless to influence the Tibetans. One significant sign of hope for the British was that the dark memories of Guru appeared to be lifting. The scene near the Mission's camp was little short of remarkable: British officers and soldiers, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Bhutias, all bargaining amicably with their foes of a fortnight ago. Vegetables, eggs, condiments, watches, cigarettes, carpets, trinkets, cooking utensils and even penny whistles kept changing hands. The Tibetans appeared to be born traders and were sending message to Phari for more goods from India.[165] Now was the psychological moment to strike. A march to Lhasa would be quick and effective. 'By carrying the Amban with me,' telegraphed Younghusband, 'I could manage this advance without further fighting or, at any rate without a serious collision. Our prestige is now at its height; Nepal and Bhutan are with us; the people are not against us; the soldiers do not want to fight; the Lamas are stunned; the Dalai Lama is prepared to fly, and the Russians are engaged elsewhere.'[166]

The Home Government had in the meantime brought out the first Tibetan Blue Book, and although it made its appearance at a most opportune moment, when feeling in England was running high against Russia, there was noticeable unease in Parliament. Lord Reay was unimpressed by the Russian bogy, or by the prospects for Tibetan trade.[167] The timing of events could not have come at a more unfortunate moment, for Britain and Russia had just agreed to enter into amicable discussions on their mutual relations, and the Younghusband Expedition was bound to arouse the mistrust of the Russian Government.

He also took issue with Curzon on the latter's dismissal of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as a 'constitutional fiction'; it struck him 'as an extremely impolitic suggestion.....when we realise what suzerainty means to us in India.'[168]

Lord Ripon spoke in similar vein. No power, he said,

would be foolish enough to contemplate invading India through Tibet. Similarly, it would be unwise to attempt to extend India's frontiers in a northerly direction. His advice to the Government was to stay behind the great Himalayan wall.

Nor was Ripon impressed by the charge that the Tibetans were hampering trade. While he accepted that the value of this trade, though currently of little account, might develop in the future, he was against any 'attempt to do it by the agency of force.'[169]

To Lord Rosebery, 'the first hundred pages or something like that, of this Blue-book are devoted entirely to the ambition of the Indian Government to impose the drinking of Indian tea on a people which prefer Chinese tea.'[170]

Meanwhile, Sir Henry Cotton, a former Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, who had once railed against the obduracy of the Tibetans and the deviousness of the Chinese, in his new position as President of the Indian National Congress, criticised the Government of India in a series of letters to the *Times*. His stricture on Curzon for having attacked a country whose sole desire was to be left alone, though not entirely unfair, was perhaps over simplified.[171] His dismissal of the *Times* Correspondent's fanciful account of Dorjieff's sinister influence at Lhasa was telling.[172] But his defence of Chinese suzerainty in Tibet was not only little short of absured; it was, in view of his previous knowledge of the situation as an important civil servant in India, plainly hypocritical.[173] 'The truth is,' he remarked, 'that their suzerainty was no fiction deliberately shattered by the policy of Curzon's Government. It is the present expedition that has destroyed Chinese power and influence and dealt a deadly blow at the integrity and independence of China, which His Majesty's ministers have professed themselve so anxious to maintain.'[174]

The *Times* in its editorial of the same date refuted Cotton's charges with contemptuous ease :

> It is not the policy of Lord Curzon that has undermined Chinese suzerainty; it is the policy of Lhasa itself...It is because what may be called the national party is in the

> ascendant, and finds the first and most obvious step towards the Home Rule which it desires in the cessation of the regency necessitated by the existence of a child Dalai Lama. The regency meant that China confirmed, or withheld confirmation, from his appointment. The Lamas have made up their minds to get rid of this badge of dependence upon the Middle Kingdom, and it is really too much to saddle the Viceroy with responsibility for their proceedings.[175]

At the end of April (1904) Curzon left India on furlough. As his relations with his colleagues in England had been steadily deteriorating, it was felt on either side that personal conversations in London might dissipate much of the acrimony and bitterness that were increasingly coming in the way of old friendships.

Before he left, the Viceroy in a telegram[176] recommended the occupation of the Chumbi Valley on the ground that it lay on the southern sides of the Himalayan watershed and that its inhabitants were hostile to Tibetans from other regions. Britain's political influence in Tibet had both to be exclusive and supreme. If such an objective could be secured without a protectorate, the latter could be readily dispensed with ; if not, Britain would be driven to it. The answer rested in the hands of Russia : were she to desist from political, commercial, diplomatic, or religious interference, such a protectorate would be unnecessary ; but not if her secret embassies, negotiations and intrigues were to be resumed. It was most unlikely that the Home Government in their current mood would accept this course of action, confirmation of which came in Brodrick's private letter to Curzon on the latter's arrival in England. He was told that orders had gone out for the advance into Tibet to continue, if satisfactory negotiations had not commenced within a month, but was warned that in view of his cherished belief that Gyantse was merely a step on the way to Lhasa,

> the advance will, therefore, be more palatable to you than it is to us, for however inevitable it may be, I hardly think you can realise how little appetite there is in England at this moment for another little war of any description.... However there is nothing to do but to go on, and we are taking steps accordingly.[177]

Meanwhile in India Ampthill had become the Acting Viceroy. Of a more pliable disposition he kept in regular step with the wishes of the Home Government. No sooner had he taken charge than he informed Younghusband that London was 'very much against an advance to Lhasa in view of the public pledges and the vital importance of averting a quarrel with Russia, and the Secretary of State, telegraphing to me yesterday, directed me to give you a hint against undue precipitancy. He said that he had noted throughout your telegrams, all of which had been repeated to him verbally, a distinct eagerness for a further advance, which I gather has caused the Cabinet some apprehension.'[178]

The Home Government had commenced delicate negotiations with the Russians in May with a view to reaching an understanding on all the outstanding issues dividing them. As a first step Lansdowne hoped that Russia would adhere to the Anglo-French Khedivial Decree in return for which the British Government promised to stand by the terms of the Secretary of State's telegram of 6 November 1903 to the Government of India, the gist of which sanctioned an advance in Tibet strictly on the understanding that its purpose was to get satisfaction ; and that no protectorate, occupation or entanglement in that country was to be countenenced.[179] The Russians accepted the Khedivial Decree[180], so from now on the Home Government became doubly cautious about Tibet, afraid that precipitate action there might upset this new understanding, and also the greater prize of a more comprehensive agreement to follow, once the Russo-Japanese War was behind them.

All this time Younghusband chafed and fretted at Gyantse ; the expeditionary force had fought two further engagements, one of which was on the forbidding heights of Karola, some 17—18,000 feet above sea level, and the time had surely come, in his view, for the Government of India to permit the final advance to Lhasa. The Acting Viceroy brought him sharply to heel. The Commisioner was told in a tartly worded telegram that while he was free to express his opinions

these should be couched within the framework of the Home Government's policies.[181]

In a private letter Ampthill explained the Cabinet's current pre-occupation with patronizing deliberation. Younghusband's difficulties with the Tibetans were appreciated but

> the Government of India, however, have to take a wider view of the situation and to take into consideration such matters as finance, the position of other frontiers, and public opinion. The Home Government have to take a still wider view for, isolated though Tibet may seem to be to those who are cooped up in its inhospitable valleys, that which we are doing in Tibet closely affects our political relations with all the Great Powers.....
>
> Now the principal object which His Majesty's Government have at heart is to complete the great and important treaty which they have just negotiated with France. To do so it is necessary to persuade all the Great Powers to assent to the arrangements which are proposed in respect of Egypt. Russia makes the consent of her assent an undertaking on the part of Great Britain not to intervene permanently in Tibetan affairs and she thinks not unnaturally though without any real justifications, that we are taking advantage of her present troubles to extend our frontiers towards her own dominions ...nothing could be more disastrous to the peace of the world than that Russian dislike and resentment against us should be increased at the present time. It is important to diminish it and hence the policy of His Majesty's Government. That policy may result in the failure of the Tibetan Mission but even that is better than the certain prospect of a war with Russia from the point of view of the whole British Empire.[182]

The Acting Viceroy, however, revealed his general dilemma to Sir Hugh Barnes, the Indian Foreign Secretary :

> The Tibetan question is assuming a very ugly shape and we are now placed in the following dilemma—either to let the Mission prove fruitless and thus incur much odium and ridicule or else to resort to the permanent intervention in Tibetan affairs which alone can ensure the success of the Mission but which will sow a harvest of incalculable future trouble in the shape of Russian resentment, and increased responsibilities.[183]

Ampthill's personal dilemma became increasingly acute as he was only temporarily in charge. Small wonder that in writ-

ing to Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, he complained that

> My position between the Home Government, the Mission, Lord Curzon and a number of other forces which are at work is like that of the man at the switchboard of a vast electrical power establishment ; if I turn the wrong switch and make a mistake about the current I may see some great 'dynamo' fused in an instant of get blown up myself.[184]

In the meantime the continuing stalement at Gyantse meant the the Home Government had to give serious thought to the possibility of an advance to Lhasa. Brodrick drew up a set of instructions for Younghusband, in case the latter was called upon to negotiate in the Tibetan capital, which were as follows :

(1) No British Resident to be demanded at Lhasa or elsewhere.

(2) The Tibetans and Chinese were required to agree that no portion of Tibetan territory would be ceded to any foreign power and that no such power would be permitted to interfere in Tibetan affairs.

(3) The two Lachung men were to be released and a suitable reparation demanded for any ill treatment.

(4) All fortified positions accessible from the point reached by the Mission and the frontier to be razed.

(5) A trade mart was to be established at Gyantse, in addition to the one at Yatung, and under similar provisions to those existing at the latter. British and Tibetan agents were to have access to it. The Tibetan Trade Agent was empowered to receive letters from his British counterpart and to be responsible for forwarding them where necessary to the Tibetan and Chinese authorities at Lhasa and transmitting their replies.

(6) The boundary pillars at the Sikkim frontier pulled down by the Tibetans were to be rebuilt by them.

(7) Trade and customs agreements should be drawn up on the general lines of the old convention.

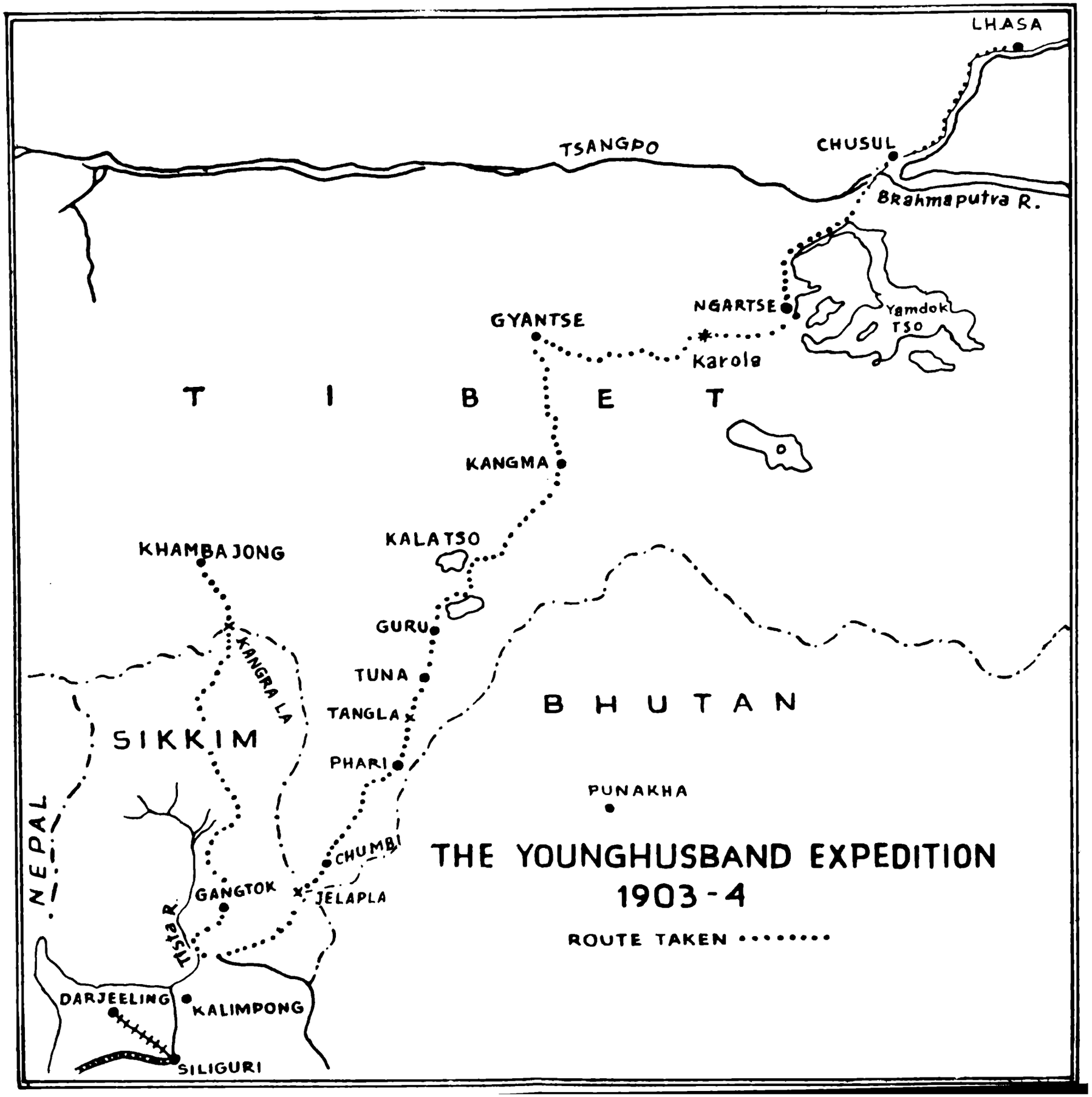
(8) The Chumbi Valley was to be occupied as security for the payment of the indemnity and for the fulfilment of provisions regarding the trade marts.

It was moreover emphasised that the indemnity should not exceed the power and capacity of the Tibetans to pay, the payment if necessary to be made over three years.[185]

Curzon, who was still on home leave, immediately wrote a letter of protest to the Secretary of State[186] Without a British Resident in Tibet the agreement would be robbed of most of its value. He was for the freedom of trade all round since limiting it to one or two specific routes could lead to its strangulation. He was afraid that Russia might return by securing mining and commercial rights, since there was no adequate safeguard in the proposed treaty against such an eventuality. However, Curzon sensed with considerable bitterness that as he had failed to carry the Home Government with him his latest recommendation would carry little weight. The Acting Viceroy had, however, previously suggested the addition of two clauses ; first, one that would bar Tibet from granting commercial, mining or road and telegraph concessions to any foreign power without the previous consent of the British, and ensure that Lhasa should undertake not to pledge its revenues to any external authority ; secondly, that another trade mart be opened at Gartok, so that the commerce of Western Tibet and the regions contiguous to it in British India would in no way suffer.[187] These amendments were to be eventually incorporated into the text of the final agreement between Britain and Tibet.

The permission to advance to Lhasa having been given in the face of the continuing Tibetan refusal to negotiate, Younghusband arrived at the Forbidden City on 3 August, 1904. The Dalai Lama had fled leaving his seals of office with the Regent. The Chinese Amban called on the British Commissioner and promised every help in effecting a speedy settlement. Close on his heels came the Nepalese representative to pay his respects, while the Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan remained with the Mission as their guest.

For Younghusband, and indeed, for Curzon, it was a dream come true. They had both firmly believed that meaningful negotiations with Tibet could only be held in Lhasa, as a display of British power here would create a lasting impression.


LHASA
TSANGPO
CHUSUL
Brahmaputra R.
NGARTSE
Yamdok TSO
GYANTSE
Karola
T I B E T
KANGMA
KHAMBAJONG
KALATSO
GURU
KANGRA LA
TUNA
TANGLA
SIKKIM
PHARI
B H U T A N
PUNAKHA
NEPAL
CHUMBI
GANGTOK
JELAPLA
Tista R.
DARJEELING
KALIMPONG
SILIGURI
THE YOUNGHUSBAND EXPEDITION
1903-4
ROUTE TAKEN ••••••••

The Frontier Commissioner wast he first European to enter Lhasa since Pères Huc and Gabet in 1846 and the first Englishman since Manning in 1811. But of the city, save for the magnificent stone structure of the Potala, or its monkish inhabitants neither he nor his companions held any great opinion. Mystic though he was Tibetan Buddhism appeared to hold no special charms for him.

Meanwhile a copy of the Secretary of State's despatch of 5 August had been forwarded to the mission's headquarters at Lhasa.[188] It reminded the members of the Indian Government of the principles enunciated in Lord George Hamilton's despatch of 27 February 1903, that India's foreign relations had European implications, and so frontier problems could no longer, as in times gone by, be regarded as purely local issues. The wider interests of the Empire had to be kept constantly in view. It was a repetition of the sage advice already given to the Frontier Commissioner by Ampthill, but of which Younghusband thought little as he was to make clear in a book written six years later. 'I knew,' he complained,

> about the 'international relations' and the 'wider view', for copies of all the important despatches to our Ambassadors were sent to me. But there were dozens and scores of men to represent those 'wider' views, which need not, as is so often imagined, be wiser simply because they are wider, whereas there was only one person, and that was myself, to represent the narrower view, but which because it was local, need not be inferior or less important.[189]

To return however to Brodrick's instructions : this included a final paragraph on the question of an indemnity. In view of the bitter controversy it was to arouse later, and the charges of insubordination that were to be levelled at Younghusband, it is as well to quote the Secretary of State's own words :

> As regards the amount of the indemnity, our ignorance of the resources of the country makes it impossible to speak with any certainty. The question, in the circumstances, must be left to the discretion of Colonel Younghusband. The condition that the amount should be one which it is estimated can be paid in three years, indicates the intention of His Majesty's Government that the sum to be demanded should

constitute an adequate pecuniary penalty, but not be such as to go beyond the powers of the Tibetans.[190]

The Lhasa Convention between Britain and Tibet was signed on 7 September 1904. Although the Amban's role in achieving this settlement was acknowledged by Younghusband, the final document lacked a Chinese signature. And as it was British policy to accept Peking's suzerainty over Tibet the absence of an official Chinese seal was one of the treaty's fundamental weaknesses.

Article 9. which incorporated the Government of India's recommendation was as follows :

The Government of Tibet engages that, without the previous consent of the British Government—

(a) no portion of Tibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased mortgaged or otherwise given for occupation, to any foreign Power ;

(b) no such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Tibetan affairs ;

(c) no Representative or Agents of any Foreign Power shall be admitted to Tibet ;

(d) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any Foreign Power, or to the subject of any Foreign Power.[190A]

Did the aforementioned 'Foreign Power' include China ? Further negotiations were required before the matter was resolved to the mutual satisfaction of Britain and China,

Article 6 stipulated that an indemnity of Rs. 75 lakhs (£500,000) was to be paid in seventy five annual instalments beginning on 1 January 1906 during which time Britain was to retain possession of the Chumbi Valley. This was to be drastically modified by the Home Government to Rs. 25 lakhs, to be paid in three annual instalments, after which the Chumbi Valley would be returned to Lhasa, as it was felt in London that both the amount and the period of occupation were excessive. Lansdowne in particular expressed his strong opposition.

What brought greater odium on Younghusband was the *special article* attached to the treaty, which was repudiated

and expunged from the official copy by the Home Government. It was, however, reproduced in Younghusband's own book and ran thus :

> The Government of India agrees to permit the British agent, who will reside at Gyantse, to watch the conditions of British trade, to visit Lhasa, when it is necessary, to consult with high Chinese and Tibetan officials on such commercial matters of importance as he has found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or by personal conference with the Tibetan agent.[191]

From St Petersburg Charles Hardinge viewed the British entry into Lhasa with considerable misgiving. The Russians had taken the event pretty well despite their conviction that Britain had taken advantage of their pre-occupation with the war against Japan. For the sake of preserving the understanding already achieved between the British and Russian Governments a withdrawal from the Tibetan capital had to be speedily effected. Lansdowne was able to reassure him that the Mission would soon be on its way home.

It was, however, the publication of the Lhasa Convention with its controversial 9th Article, and its provision for a British Occupation of the Chumbi Valley which drew Hardinge's broadside. 'I hope that you will not think me unduly sensitive upon this question,' he wrote to the Foreign Secretary,

> but it may be that in my position here I see more clearly than the officials at the India Office perhaps see the real dangers which may result from the very strictest fulfilment of our pledges to Russia as regards Thibet ..... it seems to me that the occupation of the Chumbi Valley, though nominally for three years, is a dangerous measure likely through force of circumstances to become permanent and to finally resolve itself into annexation ..... and although I may be shortsighted I do not see that the occupation presents any material advantage to us ..... I feel so strongly the transcendental importance of adhering to the very strictest interpretation of our assurances to the Russian Government, and that any deviation on our part will give them a handle which they will be able to seize and to cause endless trouble by ignoring their engagements to us in Persia and Afghanistan. I do not say that they will not do this in any case, but the faithful execution of our promises *now* will make our position *then* so much the stronger.[192]

Lansdowne shared Hardinge's fears. 'I am not surprised,' he replied, 'that this Tibetan affair should have exercised your mind. I have been much perturbed about it. Younghusband seems to have taken the bit between his teeth, and we are placed in a very embarrassing situation.'[193] However, he assured him that the term 'foreign Powers' mentioned in Article 9 of the Lhasa Convention included Britain ; and that Younghusband's indemnity would be drastically reduced as would the occupation of the Chumbi Valley from 75 to 3 years. Having journeyed to Lhasa in search of reparation the British Government could hardly ask for less.

But Britain had not only Russian susceptibilities to take into account. The American Tibetologist, W. W. Rockhill, who was Secretary of State Hay's adviser on Chinese affairs expressed his Government's disquiet to Satow. '.....the mission to Tibet was a most unfortunate step which will inevitably result in impairing Chinese prestige, control and sovereignty over what we all hold to be an integral part of the Chinese Empire, and may be later on used by some other Power as a valid precedent for territorial acquisition in China. Then again we think the reasons given for this "war with Tibet" quite insufficient, the interests of trade unimportant and the danger from Russia, in that quarter at least, too small to justify the means adopted by the Indian Government.'[194]

Lansdowne evinced surprise at the strength of American feeling on the subject ; only now did he fully appreciate the significance of the United States Ambassador Choate's enquiry 'whether what we were doing affected the rights of China in Tibet.'[195] The publication of the terms of the Tibetan Settlement, the Foreign Secretary hoped, would help allay American suspicions, although he accepted that Younghusband's heavy indemnity coupled especially with the projected 75-year British occupation of the Chumbi Valley were unlikely to dispel such fears easily.

Having got to Lhasa, Younghusband sought permission to winter there in order to win the confidence of the Tibetans ; to consolidate the gains already won. The Government of India,

mindful of their instructions, naturally refused, and with the cold weather fast approaching, the British Commissioner made for home. Unfortunately he received the Secretary of State's telegram, giving him permission to extend his stay in Lhasa till mid-October so that he could modify those articles in the Lhasa Convention the Home Government found unacceptable, only a day before his departure. To have postponed his return to India might have alarmed the Tibetans, explained the Commissioner. The Government was, after all, free to adjust such portions of the treaty later.

Younghusband returned home to face a severe reprimand from the Secretary of State. He was accused of flouting the wishes of the Home Government : the indemnity was much too severe ; the separate article a gross violation of his instructions. The Commissioner put up a sturdy defence : the amount included in the indemnity was suggested by the Tibetans themselves. Paid over 75 years it would be reduced to half its original value. Rs. 36 lakhs was half Indore's annual revenue and Tibet was richer than Indore. Furthermore in a country where wealth was not principally to be found in cash and where the monasteries were likely to squeeze a hapless peasantry in order to meet this financial obligation, an indemnity spread over a longer period would constitute a considerable relief for the ordinary people and assuage any feelings of popular hostility towards the British. The separate article was justified on the ground that it was meant to be no more than a bargaining counter.[196]

The Commissioner had parted on the most amicable terms with the Tibetan authorities ; he contrasted this with the implacable hatred of the British by the Afghans in 1840 when the Mission to Kabul had departed. The secondary gains were also of considerable value : an old friendship with Nepal had been consolidated, but more significant, new and fruitful ties with the Bhutanese had been established.[197] The Tongsa Penlop had personally put Younghusband into touch with some of the leading Tibetan dignitaries. A year ago Bhutan and England were virtual strangers, now they were allies, and no-

where was Bhutan's new enthusiasm more manifest than in her permission to British surveyors, in search of an easier route from India to Tibet, to enter her territory.

Brodrick, however, was unmollified by these explanations. Younghusband was Curzon's man and as his relations with the Viceroy continued on a downward course, the Commissioner became the prime target of his wrath.

Curzon on his way back to India in a letter from Port Said pleaded with Brodrick to give Younghusband, who was shortly due in England, a fair hearing ; he ridiculed the opposition of the military to allow Younghusband to winter at Lhasa with an escort of 500 men on the ground that the force was insufficient, and saw in General Macdonald's refusal to remain in the Tibetan capital the malevolent hand of Kitchener.[198] But any hope of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State repairing an old friendship was dashed with the arrival of Brodrick's despatch of 2 December. The language was curt ; its tone offensive. It was a snub both to the Viceroy and the Commissioner ; and its inclusion in the second Blue Book published in February (1905) was meant for all the world to see. The sting lay in the final paragraph :

> Indian frontier policy could no longer be regarded from an exclusively Indian point of view, that the course to be pursued in such cases must be laid down by His Majesty's Government alone. It is essential that this should be borne in mind by those who find themselves entrusted with the conduct of affairs in which the external relations of India are involved, and that they should not allow themselves, under the pressure of the problems that confront them on the spot, to forget the necessity of conforming to the instructions which they have received from His Majesty's Government, who have more immediately before them the interests of the British Empire as a whole.[199]

Brodrick wrote privately to Curzon explaining that its wording and spirit had been virtually forced on him by the Cabinet. His first draft had been deliberately colourless so as not to offend him.[200]

The publication of the Blue Book and its leaked contents to the Press stoked the embers of the Curzon-Brodrick

quarrel. The Viceroy found the howls of delight from such Radical papers as the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* particularly irksome. He was angrier at Brodrick's attempt to curry favour with editors in other sectious of the press in order to win allies for the Home Government in the developing struggle.[201]

> 'What an ass Brodrick has made of himself,' remarked Chirol to Hardinge, 'over his Tibetan Blue Book ! I have never heard, I think, such a chorus of disapprobation. Even Lee-Warner, who has always been a consistent and strong opponent of Curzon and especially of his Tibetan policy, came to see me last week on purpose to congratulate the *Times* on its protest.... It is so beastly mean too. What would have been the Government's position if Younghusband had had to come away from Lhasa without any Treaty at all, which might well have happened after the three months he had been kept hanging about at Gyantse whilst Ministers were making up their precious minds and wasting much more precious time.[202]

The Foreign Editor of *The Times* confirmed that the Secretary of State had sent three newspapers an advance copy of the Blue Book with an accompanying note giving references to passages which should be erased in order to sterilise the despatches of the Indian Government.

The publication of the second Blue Book on Tibet had perhaps an importance which transcended the confines of a purely domestic controversy ; for by making clear the Home Government's own sympathies in the matter it was hoped that the doubts and suspicions of foreign Powers, on whose goodwill Britain had set special store, would be assuaged.

On the basis of the available evidence there is little doubt that Younghusband was somewhat free in the interpretation he gave to the Home Government's instructions. His experience as a Frontier Officer had moulded his wider outlook on life ; he had learnt to spurn caution for its own sake.

> Time after time, risk pays. Deliberately, and with your eyes open and in full confidence, run a risk for a good end and you will come out safe with your end achieved. Shrink from running a necessary risk, and danger will relentlessly pursue

> you, hunt you down and crush you..... The cautious is not necessarily the best course. In most cases it is the worst.[203]

Complementing this principle was the readiness to seize opportunities.

> An opportunity should never be lost. A frontier agent should be alert as a hawk to snatch it. It comes and goes in a flash ; and failure to seize it may mean years of ponderous and expensive effort for Government..... Opportunities here occur which if seized lead on to fortune. But action must be swift. And if it has to be swift, and if it is not to be rash, there must be full previous knowledge of all the conditions, and perpetual fitness in the agent to play the decisive part he may be called upon to take.[204]

Ampthill tried in vain to intercede on the Frontier Commissioner's behalf, pleading with Godley to 'stick up for Younghusband as much as you can ; it would be a terrible mistake to make a scape-goat of him.'[205] His efforts were to be of no avail, for in the Honours List, Younghusband was awarded only a K. C. I. E.—the lowest order of knighthood India could bestow. He was caught in the cross-fire of a bitter quarrel between two great adversaries, as he was himself to recognise many years later ; and so it was on him that the wrath of the Secretary of State fell. To Brodrick he became a living reminder of the life-long friendship with Curzon that had turned sour ; a symbol of pain and frustration.

When in August 1905 the Viceroy tendered his resignation the Home Government's quarrel with him had assumed the dimensions of a vendetta. Brodrick thought nothing of citing Curzon's unpopularity in Bengal as a means of stopping the King from offering him an honour on his return home,[207] while Balfour, typically, shielded himself behind the excuse that since the Viceroy's just reward was inevitable it would be wiser to defer the prize until such time as the controversy had died down.[207]

What of the Russian threat ? Curzon's perception of Russia existed at the broadest level. How far was it justified in relation to Tibet ? The final answer can only be given when the archives in Moscow are open to public inspection. In the light of available evidence, proof of Russian activity in Lhasa

remains scanty. When Younghusband reached the Tibetan capital, he found no Russian drill sergeants, and apart from a rusty gun or two, no Russian armaments either.

Fanciful stories about Dorjieff, the Buriat Mongol, intriguing in Tibet on the Tsar's behalf can now be dismissed as the product of nervous imaginations. There is no reason to doubt the veracity of the Russian interpreter Nabokoff's account of Lamsdorff's meeting with Dorjieff which apparently 'never went beyond the flattest of banalities.'[208] While this proves the Russian Foreign Minister was honest in his assurances to Lansdowne, it does not rule out the possibility that other elements close to the Tsar may have harboured ambitious designs. After all, Hardinge, despite his broadsides against Curzon in later years, had told the Foreign Office from St. Petersburg that he feared Russia was up to some sort of mischief at Lhasa.

The Viceroy's suspicions were not entirely groundless. A cursory look at a map of Central Asia and the Far East would show the immense swathes of territory absorbed by the Tsarist Empire. In a standard work on the subject, Andrew Malozemoff[209] describes how this Russian drive was sustained by state sponsored economic enterprises, for Witte, a disciple of the German economist Frederick List, was motived by a visionory Slavophilism. The message of Russia's historic mission was enunciated not by obscure men but by such well known personalities as M. N. Prejavalsky, the renowned explorer, Professor F. F. Martens, a leading authority on International Law and an adviser to the Russian Foreign Office ; and not least by Count Witte himself. Another fervent propagandist was Prince Esper Ukhtomskii, editor of the influential *St. Petersburg News*, who accompanied Tsarevich Nicholas on a journey to the Far East in 1890-91 as tutor and lecturer, and who later became the first Chairman of the Russo-Chinese Bank and a director of the Chinese Eastern Railway, both agencies designed to facilitate Russian expansion.

But it was Count Witte who supplied these schemes with the necessary ballast : the Russo-Chinese Bank and the Manchurian railway were his brainchildren, Less well known but equally

daring was his support of Peter Alexandrovich Badmaev, a Buriat who came to St. Petersburg in 1853, eventually to become a lecturer in Mongolian at the University ; and who in 1893 proposed that a trading company be financed with state patronage near the Chinese border, whose covert aim would be to finance rebellions of Tibetans, Mongolians and Moslems against the Manchu dynasty. Such uprisings, it was calculated, would lead to the dismemberment of China and the incorporation of her outlying provinces into Russia. Badmaev's Company with an initial capital of two million roubles was established in 1893 and only in 1900 was the undertaking finally dissolved.

No doubt Russian designs were concentrated on China but Tibet was part of what was loosely described as the Chinese Empire ; and it would not be the first time that Russia in the pursuit of her interests in Mongolia sought to gain leverage at Lhasa.

T'ang Shao-Yi, one of China's ablest diplomats, had informed Sir Ernest Satow that not long after the signature of the 1890 Convention, the Dalai Lama obtained written assurances from Russia of her readiness to protect Tibet against British India. These documents, three in number, had been obtained by Amban Sheng-tai whose subordinates had been bribed to give them up and, as such, they had disappeared. This story, if true, commented Satow, showed that Russian intrigue at Lhasa had started long before it was commonly supposed to have begun.[210]

About conditions in Tibet, Curzon's assessment was generally sound. The lamas were indeed parasites battening on the land ; from them came the fiercest opposition to increased contact with the outside world. Lay elements were more favourable to a change in Lhasa's traditional policy of isolation. W. D. Shakabpa, a former Tibetan civil servent, tells how Paljor Dorje Shatra, Tibet's representative in Darjeeling at the turn of the century (later to distinguish himself at the Simla Conference of 1914), having seen British power at first hand, had argued for open ties with Britain. His reports were decried by conservative forces who denounced him as a traitor.[211] He suffered a temporary eclipse only to be vindicated years later.

Curzon was well advised on the politically assertive mood within the higher echelons of the Tibetan hierarchy; he saw through the sham of Chinese power and was quick to appreciate the implications of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's rise to authority. A free Tibet keeping China at bay, without at the same time turning to Russia for help, would, in his view, constitute an ideal buffer for India, and was therefore a vital British interest. It was thus the business of the Foreign Office to tell St. Petersburg that Russia's goal in Mongolia was, broadly, Britain's goal in Tibet: spheres of influence, remain, to this day a corner-stone of great power diplomacy.

The trade of Tibet at which members of the Home Government were inclined to scoff had a rewarding future. Younghusband in a lengthy report[212] waxed eloquent on its prospects. Though no more than a fraction of Britain's total turnover in India, its future development locally could have strengthened her security along the Himalayas. Broader commercial ties with Lhasa might have drawn it into the web of a closer relationship with British India to their mutual benefit. The Viceroy recognised that India's own strategic imperatives had to be given due weight. She could no longer be treated as the military drudge of the Empire, for to do so would loosen the imperial fabric.

He had indeed dilated at length on the subject during his first year of office: writing then to Hamilton he remarked:

> When you say that I look at the question [Persian Gulf] mainly, if not entirely, from the Indian point of view, I do not see in that any reproach, since it appears to me to be the main point of view from which it must in any case be regarded. We have got to provide for the safety of the Indian Empire. That duty is of course *ex hypothesi* an Indian interest; but being an Indian interest it is equally an Imperial interest. All that falls within the radius of our political influence in India must inevitably be looked at from the Indian point of view, and any statesman who looks at it from any other point of view will not only have no knowledge of its real proportions, but will also do an injustice to the wider Imperial interests, of which Indian interests form a part.... and to you I look, not less than to myself, as Viceroy,

to defend Indian interests, and to do justice to the Indian aspect of the case....[213]

When on his return to England on furlough Curzon tried to plead his case on Tibet he was met with the excuse that Russia's assent to the Khedivial Decree was urgently needed, at which he exploded with scorn :

Each Cabinet Minister admits to me in private that the Cabinet have been wrong, but shelters himself behind the collective ignorance and timidity of the whole ; while Lansdowne, who valiantly declared six months ago, that the Russians had no voice in the matter, has now made a bargain with them on Egypt in connection with Tibet ! Good God ! Such is the wisdom with which we are ruled.[214]

With the Triple Entente between France, Britain and Russia taking shape it was almost inevitable that Curzon's Tibetan policy, which seemed an impediment, would become the Home Government's sacrificial pawn. A few residual advantages remained as British influence and authority were consolidated in the border states of Nepal and Bhutan. But Anglo-Tibetan relations having reached their climax after more than a century of political enterprise, of daring exploration and physical danger, failed to reach the promised consummation.

As expected, the Indian Exchequer bore the full cost of the Younghusband Mission, although certain members of the House of Commons pleaded for this expenditure to be evenly shared, as the principal beneficiaries of the trans—Himalayan commerce were British and European interests.[215]

Nothing else remained save the debris of broken friendships, of injured reputations, and the bitter disappointment of Viceregal triumph denied.

CHAPTER III

1. Elgin Papers, F84/64, 28 Elliot to Elgin, 19 June, 1896.
2. Ibid, Elgin to Hamilton, 26 November, 1895.
3. Ibid, Elgin to White, 13 June, 1895.
4. Ronaldshay, *Life of Curzon*, Vol. 1, London, 1927, p. 133.
5. *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 September, 1928. John Morley, a political opponent, paid a warm tribute to

Curzon's grasp of administrative problems: 'Whenever I want to know something about Indian administration, it is always to his minutes and despatches that I have to turn. The man's knowledge and industry and thoroughness were unrivalled. The pity is that his political judgement was that of a Tory and a jingo.'

V. Chirol, *Fifty Years in a Changing World*, London, 1927, p. 235.

6. G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, London, 1894, p. 421

7. L/PS/7/139, No. 1376, Minute by Lord Curzon on Russian Ambitions in Eastern Persia, 28 October, 1901.

8. G. N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, London, 1889. Ibid, 'Russian and British Competition in Central Asia,' *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, London. Volume 8, 1889, pp. 438-457.

9. Papers Relating to Tibet, CD. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 26, Curzon to Hamilton, 30 March, 1899.

10. Ibid, Annexure to No. 26, Curzon to the Imperial Commissioner, 25 March, 1899.

11. L/PS/117, No. 1018, Enclosure 5, Bengal to India, 8 July, 1899.

12. Ibid, Enclosure 6, India to Bengal, 26 July, 1899.

13. L/PS/7/117, No. 1018, Curzon to Hamilton, 26 October, 1899.

14. L/PS/7/117, No. 1018, Enclosure 3 in 189, India to Bengal, 3 June, 1899.

15. Ibid, Enclosure 5 to 189, Bengal to India, 8 July, 1899.

16. L/PS/7/117, No. 1018, Enclosure 8 in 189, Bengal to India, 13 Sept., 1899.

17. Ibid.

18. L/PS/7/125, No. 891, Political Officer, Sikkim, to Commissioner Rajshahi, 20 March, 1900.

19. Ibid, India to Burma, 25 January, 1900.

20. Ibid, Burma to India, 2 February, 1900.

21. Ibid, Kennion to Talbot, 30 May, 1900.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid, Kennion to Talbot, 8 November, 1899.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid, India to Talbot, 25 July, 1900.
27. Ibid, Curzon to Dalai Lama, 11 August, 1900.
28. Papers Relating to Tibet, CD. 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, Hardinge to Salisbury, 17 October, 1900.
29. Hamilton Papers, D. 510/6, Curzon to Hamilton, 18 November, 1900.
30. Ibid, D. 501/1, Curzon to Hamilton, 24 May, 1899.
31. Papers Relating to Tibet, CD. 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 33. Smith to Lansdowne, 25 June, 1901.
32. Ibid, No. 34. Scott to Lansdowne, 1 July, 1901.
33. Ibid, No. 35. Scott to Lansdowne, 4 July, 1901.
34. Ibid, No. 39. Sir C. Scott to Lansdowne, 10 July, 1901.
35. L/PS/7/135, No. 930. Curzon to Dalai Lama, 8 June, 1901.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid, No. 930. Curzon to Hamilton, 25 July, 1901.
38. L/PS/7/143, No. 571. Chandra Shamsher to Colonel Pears, 25 December, 1901.
39. L/PS/7/144, No. 1533a. E. H. C. Walsh to Bengal, 7 December, 1901.
40. L/PS/7/144, No. 770. Transfrontier Diary, 30 April, 1902.
41. Curzon Papers, F. 111/340E, Note on Tibet by Captain W. F. O'Connor, 10 June, 1901.
42. Ibid.
43. L/PS/7/142, No. 361. Enclosure 4, Memorandum Regarding the possibility of Political or Diplomatic Mission to Tibet, 6 July, 1901.
44. There was considerable controversy as to whether Ugyen Kazi actually delivered the Viceroy's letter to the Dalai Lama. Sarat Chandra Das suspected that he did not, a suspicion which Kawaguchi, the Japanese monk, on his return from Lhasa was inclined to confirm. Curzon was scathing in his comments on what he regarded as Bengal's ineptitude, and expressed the view that the Bhutanese agent was a Tibetan spy. Ugyen Kazi must have been parti-

cularly hurt by this charge, for many years later when the Dalai Lama had fled to India before an invading Chinese force, he wrote a letter to Curzon asking him to direct C. A. Bell, the Political Officer, Sikkim, to seek from the Dalai Lama himself the truth of his story.
Curzon Papers, 111/342, Ugyen Kazi to Lord Curzon, 12 April, 1910.

45. The Commissioner of Rajshahi remarked that White's report made it clear that the present Sikkim-Tibet frontier was of great strategic value to Britain. 'By retaining it we keep the inner passes in our hands and hold possession of a country which to the east and north affords an easy route for troops into Tibet, and commands the road from Phari to Gyantse.'
L/PS/7/148, No. 1358. Commissioner Rajshahi to Bengal, 6 September, 1902.
46. L/PS/7/154, No. 798. O'Connor to India, 13 April, 1903.
47. L/PS/7/142, No. 361. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 February, 1902.
48. Ibid. I. O. Minute (no date).
49. Ibid.
50. Hamilton Papers, F. 123/76, Curzon to Hamilton, 14 August, 1901.
51. L/PS/7/149, No. 1456. Extract of Private letter from Curzon to Hamilton, 1 October, 1902.
52. LP/S/7/150, No. 1551A, Chandra Shamsher to Lt-Colonel Ravenshaw, 6 October, 1902.
53. Hamilton Papers, D510/8, Curzon to Hamilton, 10 July, 1901.
54. Curzon Papers, F. 111/160, Hamilton to Curzon, 11 July, 1901.
55. Hamilton Papers, D. 510/8, Curzon to Hamilton, 31 July, 1901.
56. Lilian Penson, *Foreign Affairs Under the Third Marquis of Salisbury*, Creighton Lecture, London University, 14 November, 1960.
57. Gooch and Temperley, *Documents on the Origin of the War,*

London, 1927, Volume 1, p. 5, Marquis of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Connor, 17 January, 1898.

58. Balfour said : 'It is not primarily a territorial policy. We do not want great accessions of territory carved out of the Chinese Empire ..... . We have no present desire to undertake the administration of millions of Chinamen. On the other hand, we are quite conscious of the preponderance of our trade interests in China over those of all other nations put together, and we are quite determined that those interests shall not be impaired.'
The Times, London, 11 January, 1898, p. 7.
59. *The Times*, London, 9 February, 1898, p. 9.
60. Ibid. 'In the last generation, 'Salisbury was later to warn, 'we did much what we liked in the East by force or by threats ; by squadrons or tall talk. But we now have "allies"—French, German, Russian : and the day of free, individual, coercive action is almost passed by. For some years to come Eastern advance must largely depend on payment : and I fear that in that race England will seldom win.'
Curzon Papers, F112/223-225, Salisbury to Curzon 23 September, 1901.
61. J. Joll, [Ed], Britain and Europe, London, 1961, pp. 192-194.
62. *Calcutta Review*, Calcutta, Volume 113, 1901, pp. 182-83.
63. Brodrick Papers, 50073, Curzon to Brodrick, 3 August, 1900.
64. Curzon Papers, F. 111/159, Hamilton to Curzon, 26 January, 1900.
65. Ibid, F. 111/160, Hamilton to Curzon, 18 January, 1901.
66. Ibid, 25 April, 1901.
67. Hamilton Papers, D. 510/8, Curzon to Hamilton, 15 May, 1901.
68. Ibid, D. 510/9, Curzon to Hamilton, 25 September, 1901.
69. Ibid.
70. Curzon Papers, F. 111/160, Hamilton to Curzon, 22 August, 1901.
71. J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy*,

London, 1970, pp. 360-361. For a more detailed study, see, Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914*, Cambridge, 1969.

72. Cabinet Records, Cab 37/58/81, Balance of Naval Power in the Far East, by Lord Selbourne, 4 September, 1901.
73. J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Solisbury and Foreign Policy*, London, 1970, pp. 438-439.
74. I. H. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, London, 1966, pp. 204-205, 209.
75. Hamilton Papers. D. 510/10, Curzon to Hamilton, 13 February, 1902.
76. Curzon Papers, F. 111/151, Hamilton to Curzon, 27 August, 1902.
77. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, enclosure in No. 53, Prince Ch'ing to Sir E. Satow, 22 August, 1902.
78. FO 17/1745, No 256, Satow to Lansdowne, 8 September, 1902.
79. FO. 800/120, Satow to Lansdowne, 11 September, 1902.
80. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 57, Scott to Lansdowne, 2 October, 1902.
81. L/PS/7/150, No. 1590 A, Extract from private letter from Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November, 1902.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid, Comment by Lee-Warner.
84. Balfour Papers, 49732, Curzon to Balfour, 16 July, 1902.
85. 'You seem to think that you are injured whenever you do not exactly get your own way ! But which of us gets his own way ? Certainly not the Prime Minister : certainly not any of his Cabinet colleagues. We all suffer the common lot of those who having to work with others, are sometimes overruled by them ... . But do not let any of us forget that there cannot be a greater mistake committed by a British statesman than to interpret any difference of opinion as a personal slight, or as indicating any want of confidence among colleagues.

Dear George, I do assure you that no one has marked

with greater pride or greater pleasure your triumphant progress ..... than your old friend and colleague ... . I have differed from you on this and that point ... . But nothing will for a moment diminish either the warmth of my friendship or the enthusiasm of my admiration.'
Balfour Papers, 49732, Balfour to Curzon, 12 December, 1902.

86. L/PS/7/151, No. 182, Curzon to Hamilton, 8 January, 1903.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Hamilton Papers, F. 123/76. Curzon to Hamilton, 12 February, 1903.
97. L/PS/7/151, No. 182, Note on Tibet by Sir Steuert Bayley, 11 February, 1903.
98. Ibid, Lee-Warner's comment, 11 February, 1903.
99. Curzon Papers, F. 111/162, Hamilton to Curzon, 19 February, 1903.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Hardinge Papers, Volume 3, Memorandum on Witte's Budget of 1902 by C. Hardinge, 22 February, 1902.
105. Ibid, Sanderson to Hardinge, 12 March, 1902.
106. Ibid, Hardinge to Sanderson, 13 November, 1902.
107. Ibid, Sanderson to Hardinge, 19 November, 1902.
108. Curzon Papers, F. 111/162, Hamilton to Curzon, 19 February, 1902.
109. L/PS/7/151, No. 182, Hamilton to Curzon, 27 February, 1903.

110. L/PS/7/151, No. 182, Enclosure 2 in No. 5, Lansdowne to Scott, 11 February, 1903.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid, Enclosure 3 in No. 5, Lansdowne to Scott, 18 February, 1903.
113. Ibid.
114. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 83, Lansdowne to Scott, 8 April, 1903.
115. Ibid.
116. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 86, Curzon to Hamilton, 16 April, 1903.
117. L/PS/7/153, No. 602, Curzon to Hamilton, 7 May, 1903.
118. Ibid.
119. Hamilton Papers, D. 510/14, Curzon to Hamilton, 7 May, 1903.
120. Curzon Papers, F. 111/162, Hamilton to Curzon, 15 May, 1903.
121. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 93, Curzon to Hamilton, 21 May, 1903.
122. Curzon Papers, F. 111/162, Hamilton to Curzon, 28 May, 1903.
123. Hamilton Papers, F. 123/1, Hamilton to Curzon, 9 July, 1903.
124. L/PS/7/155, No. 966, Enclosure 13, Government of India to Younghusband, 3 June, 1903.
125. Ibid, No. 920, Note on Russion Efforts to Reach Lhasa by Francis Younghusband, 3 June, 1903.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. L/Ps/7/157, No. 1292, Curzon to Hamilton, 16 September, 1903.
129. Barnes Papers, Microfilm Reel No. 603, Curzon to Barnes, (no date) September, 1903.
130. Curzon Papers, F. 111/10 A, Brodrick to Curzon, 14 December, 1898.
131. Brodrick Papers, 50074, Curzon to Brodrick, 30 July, 1903.

132. Ibid, Brodrick to Curzon, 19 August, 1903.
133. Ibid, Curzon to Brodrick, 10 September, 1903.
134. Ibid, Curzon to Brodrick, 2 October, 1903.
135. Ibid.
136. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No, 120, Brodrick to Curzon, 1 October, 1903.
137. Brodrick Papers, 50074, Curzon to Brodrick, 2 October, 1903.
138. Ibid.
139. Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 1920 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 123, Curzon to Brodrick, 26 October, 1903.
140. Ibid, No. 129, Curzon to Brodrick, 5 November, 1903.
141. Ibid.
142. L/PS/7/158, No. 1504, Brodrick to Curzon, 6 November, 1903.
143. Brodrick Papers, 50074, Brodrick to Curzon, 29 October, 1903.
144. Ibid, 50072, Balfour to Brodrick, 28 October, 1903.
145. L/PS/7/158, No. 1504, Bayley's Minute, 5 November, 1903.
146. Ibid, Fitzpatrick's Minute, 4 November, 1903.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid, Mackay's Minute, 4 November, 1903.
149. Brodrick Papers, 50075, Brodrick to Curzon, 6 November, 1903.
150. Ibid, Curzon to Brodrick, 1 December, 1903.
151. Ibid.
152. Cabinet Records, Cab. 37/68/1, Proposed Agreement with Russia, 1 January, 1904.
153. *Englishman's Overland Mail*, Calcutta, 5 November, 1903, p. 3. See also the *Pioneer Mail*, Lucknow, 20 November, 1903, p. 3.
154. *Englishman's Overland Mail*, 19 November, 1903, p. 5.
155. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2054 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 38, Younghusband to India, 15 January, 1904.
156. Ibid, No. 47, Younghusband to India, 22 February, 1904.

157. Ibid.
158. P. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*, London, 1962, p. 148.
159. Ibid, p. 150.
160. E. Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, London, 1905, p. 139.
161. Cited in P. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*, 1962, p. 151.
162. Cited in P. L. Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition*, London, 1968, p. 223.
163. E. Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, London, 1905.
164. Brodrick Papers, 50076, Curzon to Brodrick, 20 April, 1904.
165. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2054 of 1904, Volume 67, No. 34, Curzon to Brodrick.
166. L/PS/7/163, No. 808, Younghusband to India, 22 April, 1904.
167. Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, Volume 130, 26 February, 1904, Column 1110.
168. Reay was presumably meaning Britain's constitutional position vis a vis the Princely States ; and the same point seems to have occurred to Younghusband. Witness his remark : 'Tibet is a protected Chinese State ; Kashmir is a protected Indian State.' F. E. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, 1910, p. 323. This analogy was nothing more than a piece of legal pedantry. It was historically absurd and politically dangerous.
169. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, Volume 130, 26 February 1904, Column 1131.
170. Ibid.
171. *Times*, London, 4 December, 1903, p. 6.
172. Ibid, 31 May, 1904, p. 3.
173. Of Henry Cotton Curzon remarked : 'It is to me a melancholy and inscrutable thing that the Indian Civil Service, the proudest and most honourable in the world, turns out from time to time, and as it seems to me with increasing frequency, some of the meanest and most malignant types of disappointed humanity whom it has been my fortune to meet.'
Brodrick Papers, 50076, Curzon to Brodrick, 5 April, 1904.

174. *Times*, London, 8 April, 1904, p. 5.
175. Ibid, p. 7.
176. FO 17/1748, Curzon to Brodrick, 29 April, 1904.
177. Brodrick Papers, 50076, Brodrick to Curzon, 14 May, 1904.
178. Ampthill Papers, E 233/34, Part 1, Ampthill to Younghusband, 2 May, 1904.
179. FO 17/1749, Lansdowne to Spring-Rice, 4 May, 1904.
180. Ibid, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 18 May, 1904.
181. L/PS/7/165, No. 1214, India to Younghusband, 14 June, 1904.
182. Ampthill Papers, E 233/34, Part 1, Ampthill to Younghusband, 13 June, 1904.
183. Barnes Collection, Microfilm Reel No. 603, Ampthill to Barnes, 19 June, 1904.
184. Ampthill Papers, E 233/34, Part 1, Ampthill to Fraser, 10 July, 1904.
185. L/PS/7/166, No. 1261, Bordrick to Ampthill, 6 July, 1904.
186. Ibid, Curzon to Brodrick, 8 July, 1904.
187. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2370 of 1905, Volume 58, Part 1, No. 97, Ampthill to Brodrick, 30 June, 1904.
188. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2370 of 1905, Volume 58, Part 1, No. 115, Brodrick to Ampthill, 5 August, 1904.
189. F. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, 1910, p. 200.
190. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2370 of 1905, Volume 58, No. 115, Brodrick to Ampthill, 5 August, 1904.

190A. C. U. Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Calcutta, 1929, Vol. 14, p. 25. (hereafter referred to as Aitchison's Treaties).

191. F. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, 1910, p. 300.
192. Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/141, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 27 September, 1904.
193. Ibid, Lansdowne to Hardinge, 4 October, 1904.
194. Ibid, FO 800/121, Satow to Lansdowne, 18 July, 1904.

195. Ibid, Lansdowne to Satow, 14 September, 1904.
196. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2370 of 1905, Volume 58, Part 1, Enclosure in No. 189, Memorandum by Younghusband, 18 October, 1904.
197. Ibid, Enclosure 1 in No. 194, Younghusband to India, 28 October, 1904.
198. Brodrick Papers, 50076, Curzon to Brodrick, 29 November, 1904.
199. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 2370 of 1905, Volume 58, No. 193, Brodrick to Curzon, 2 December, 1904.
200. Brodrick Papers, 50076, Brodrick to Curzon, December, (no date), 1904.
201. Ibid, 50077, Curzon to Brodrick, 21 February, 1905.
202. Hardinge Papers, Volume 7, Chirol to Hardinge, 6 February, 1905.
203. Cited in G. Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, London, 1952, p. 260.
204. Ibid.
205. Kilbracken Papers, F 102/23, Ampthill to Godley, 3 November, 1904.
206. Brodrick Papers, 50072, Brodrick to Knollys, 22 September, 1905.
207. Cabinet Records, Cab. 37/79/154, Memorandum. A Peerage for Lord Curzon by A. J. Balfour, 6 September, 1905.
208. C. Nabokoff, 'Russia and India', *Contemporary Review*, London, Volume 130, 1926, p. 480. See also Sydenham Papers, 50841, for Typescript copy dated 1921, of 'A Russian Military Attache's Visit to India in 1911' by N. Yermoloff, Lt-General of the Imperial Russian Army.
209. A. Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy*, California, 1958, pp. 44-52.
210. FP 535/6, No. 7, Satow to Lansdowne, 29 November, 1904.
211. W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet a Political History*, New Haven, U. S. A., 1967, pp. 208-09.
212. L/PS/7/159, No. 1592, Memorandum of Our Relations

with Tibet Both Past and Present Together with a Forecast of the Future Developments of Our Policy in that Region, by F. Younghusband, 17 August, 1903.

213. Hamilton Papers, F 123/76, Curzon to Hamilton, 4 January, 1900.

214. Ampthill Papers, E 233/37, Curzon to Ampthill, 23 June, 1904.

215. Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, Volume 140, 12 August, 1904, Speech by Sir Mancherjee Bhowanagree, Columns 454-61.

CHAPTER IV

STALEMATE AND RETREAT

Faced at the turn of the 20th centry with the spectre of a disintegrating Chinese Empire, and not willing to be drawn into this vortex for fear that their unbridled rivalries might light the torch for a general conflagration, the Great Powers decided to underwrite the sanctity of China's dominions as they then stood.[1] It was from this combination of circumstances that the Chinese Empire drew much of its durability, for its one-ness proved in practice to be largely illusory.

Here, the histories of the Chinese and Ottoman Empires afford an illuminating parallel; in their declining years both came to depend mainly on the support of the Great Powers for their continued existence. In other respects, however, their destinies were to be different as even a cursory glance at a current map of the world will show : the once extensive frontiers of the Ottomans have shrunk to include only Turkey, while those of present-day China encompass all of the old Manchu dominions as they stood in the early years of this century, save that of Outer Mongolia. If modern Chinese nationalists have cause to bemoan their country's treatment at the hands of the West, they also have reason to be grateful to China's tormentors for enunciating the international ground rules which protected the territorial legacy of the Manchus and their Republican successors.[2]

The period under consideration, 1905-10, was characterised by the following developments : the first was the immediate British need to secure Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa treaty, an urgency matched by China's keenness to enter into an agreement with Britain that would, at the same time, enable her to regain lost ground in Tibet and win international

recognition of the same. What made the occasion particularly opportune for Peking was Russia's weakened state following her exhausting war with Japan,[3] as it was the relentless political and territorial pressure of the Tsarist Empire which China had most come to fear.

For Britain the projected agreement with China held out the prospect of an even greater reward, namely, an understanding with Russia based on a settlement of all their outstanding disputes in Asia. It would, to the relief of both parties, put an end to a rivalry that was proving costly politically and financially. And if the Government of India's political and commercial imperatives threatened to come in the way of such an accord, these would have to be modified to suit Britain's global aims.

The advent of a Liberal Govenment in London at the end of 1905 meant that India Office fell under John Morley's autocratic charge, and soon Britain's Himalyan policy was being recast in order to give Grey at the Foreign Office a freer hand in his dealings with Russia.

However, before the Liberals set themselves to the wheel, the life of the Conservative Ministry still had a year to run, as did the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. He had returned to India for a second term in November 1904, relinquishing his office in the same month of the following year. Hence throughout 1905 Anglo-Tibetan relations were ambiguously placed : the Home Government having repudiated the policy of their Proconsul now sought his cooperation in implementing another, wholly different in outlook. To harbour these expectations of one who believed so passionately in the correctnecss of his views was naive in the extreme. Perhaps it would be unfair to impute to the Cabinet such false hopes; they possibly did perceive the hopelessness of their situation. If so, it was quite in character that they did little to arrest the prevailing drift.

The Government of India continued to encourage journeys, explorations and contacts within Tibet, while at the same time negotiating a treaty with China which Peking hoped would effectively close Tibet, apart from a few carefully prescribed

areas, to its southern neighbour. The Home Government having reversed the policy that sent Younghusband to Lhasa seemed unwilling to face the logical consequences of their action. They agreed to talks with China over Tibet but supported Curzon in resisting Chinese demands. Yet a speedy settlement would surely have furthered the prospects of the understanding with Russia over which they had forced the Viceroy to alter course. But Balfour's Ministry, in its last year of office, exhibited the customary lack of will that comes from having been in power too long.

The first step for Britain was to get China to endorse the Lhasa Convention. It would be well to recall that in the absence of the Dalai Lama who had fled his capital at the approach of the British expeditionary force, Younghusband had been compelled to use the good offices of the Chinese Amban in parleying with the Tibetan Regent.

For China this was a signal triumph, all the more remarkable for its unexpectedness; and the possession of this ace enabled her to play a game of diplomatic poker with consummate skill.

Britain's preliminary thoughts came from E. C. Wilton of the Chinese Consular Service on special deputation to Younghusband who, writing to Satow in Peking, remarked :

> The deadlock caused by China refusing to agree to the Anglo-Tibetan Convention need not, in my opinion, cause any trouble to us. As the winning cards are with us it seems to me that we can afford to ignore China's assent. The moment that line is taken up, I feel sure that China will sign to save her face in Tibet.[4]

In view of the fuss over the supposed violation of Chinese rights in Tibet the Government of India in a telegraphic message to the Secretary of State pointed out that Tibet was neither listed as one of the eighteen provinces of China nor, unlike Sinkiang, even under the direct administration of the Imperial Government. In addition, Peking had completely failed to make Lhasa honour the provisions of the 1890 Treaty. Furthermore :

> We understand that China receives no regular revenue from,

> and levies no taxes in, Thibet, and we gather from what has been admitted to Younghusband by the Amban that China does not enjoy full freedom of trade in Thibet ; it is even stated that a tax is imposed on Chinese goods when they enter the country. Neither present Amban nor his predecessor had power to leave the capital and go to frontier until our Mission arrived. Treaties with the limitrophe States (Kashmir, Nepal, and, it is believed, Bhutan also) are the only valid Treaties which have, up to the present, been made with Thibet ; to none of these was China a signatory, and they were concluded without Chinese intervention. Thibet pays to Nepal compensation of 10,000 rupees annually under the terms of the Nepalese treaty. As a limitrophe State, we are also entitled to conclude a similar Treaty with Thibet.[5]

Even allowing the possibility that Younghusband may have coloured the Amban's confession of powerlessness, the other points made in the note were the more telling for being historically sound.

The Home Government's attitude to the whole issue was determined by wider considerations. Satow having failed in his attempts to make the 'Chinese Government see reason',[6] fresh negotiations to secure an Adhesion treaty with China became inevitable. Lansdowne and Brodrick, as part of their running battle with Curzon, perhaps hoped that such talks could take place in Peking rather than Calcutta. The British Ambassador, however, refused to rise to the bait. Much time would 'be saved by the negotiations being directed at Calcutta by the Foreign Office and the India Office working in concert. If the negotiations had taken place here, there would have been, doubtless, frequent referring to India on every point before final instructions were sent to me, and the delay on each occasion would have been considerable'.[7]

In China itself new political forces were emerging. The Boxer uprising symbolised the last stand of the old order ; the spasm of ferment and revolt having spent itself or otherwise been crushed, the Monarchy gradually sunk into the torpor of its final years. But from this decaying body politic arose phoenix-like the spirit of national renewal, militant in form, accepting the territorial heritage of the Manchus,

while rejecting their social and political values. The thrust of this movement came from southern-central China, chiefly from the great coastal cities of Canton and Shanghai ; its leaders were Han (ethnic Chinese), firmly anti-Manchu ; often the products of Western educational institutions. They had watched their country's repeated humiliation first, at the hands of the West, then at Japan's ; they had seen the slow decline of Chinese power in the peripheral areas of the Empire, notably in Central Asia : the time had now come for them to make a stand, and Tibet was to be their diplomatic field of battle. It therefore in the course of time became a highly charged metaphor in the rhetoric of Chinese nationalism.

Reporting to Lansdowne, Satow exclaimed that it was not Prince Ch'ing[8] or Na t'ung—both Manchus—who were so resentful of British action in Tibet as their colleague from Canton, Wu Ting-fang.[9] And it was another Cantonese, T' ang Shao Yi, a product of Yale University with a good command of English, who was appointed to lead his country's delegation to the forthcoming talks at Calcutta. Satow summed him up as intelligent, patriotic, reserved in manner, with a reputation for being anti-British as a result of the rough treatment he had received at the hands of one Captain Bayley during the Tientsin troubles of 1900. It was conceivable that T'ang might 'get the better of Mr. L. W. Dane Foreign Secretary, Government of India, but I think he will scarcely be a match for Lord Curzon, who I trust will get back in time'.[10]

T'ang held very definite ideas on Tibet, which he proceeded to expound to Satow. For a start the Chinese position there approximated to the term sovereignty rather than suzerainty. Tibet's position in relation to Peking's was analogous to Mongolia's. Recognising China's declining strength in Tibet, T'ang proposed to reverse this by a drastic reform of Tibetan society by which the large number of monks, about 300,000 in all, who, according to him, had battened on the wealth of the land through a life of idleness, would be made to work. Indeed, it was for making just such a proposal that a Viceroy of Szchuan (1895-97) was removed from his post.

Much had happened since then. Even the Monarchy now felt the need for younger men, less enamoured of the values of the old order, and more in tune with the contemporary world.

T'ang's views were echoed by Prince Ch'ing whose conversation with the British Ambassador was despatched in the form of a memorandum to the Foreign Office in London. Apart from underlining Chinese views on Tibet the highly nebulous concepts expressed therein on China's relations with foreign countries emphasised Peking's inability to treat on equal terms with other states. The following extract from this memorandum bears quoting :

> Sir Ernest then asked what was the proper technical term in Chinese to express the relation Thibet to China. In English China was described as the "suzerain" of Thibet. How was this expressed in Chinese ?
>
> The Prince said there was no proper word to express this. The Thibetans called the Emperor of China their "*Huangshang*", not "*Ta Huangti*", as a foreign nation would say. The word "suzerain" he supposed implied the "*shang kuo*", the "upper nation". The superiority of the Emperor over the Dalai Lama was demonstrated in his appointment by patent ("chih shu"). Sir Ernest asked whether in the Ming dynasty a "*chih shu*" was not also given to the Shogun of Japan. *His Highness.* Yes ; he believed so, though in that case it did not imply any claim on the part of China to sovereignty over Japan, but was merely the act of a big Power to a small one.
>
> Sir Ernest asked whether China considered that in Mongolia both land and people were subject to China.
>
> *His Highness.* Yes.
>
> *Sir Ernest.* And Thibet ?
>
> *His Highness.* Thibet is on very much the same footing. We have conducted military operations in Thibet, in Ch'ien Lung's reign and may be said to have subjugated it.[11]

While Ch'ien Lung may have subjugated Tibet in the 18th century, in the 20th it was Britain who had done so. It is even possible that sections of the mandarinate hoped the British would succeed where China had failed—to break the power of the Tibetan Government. Satow was not without his suspicions, for writing to Lansdowne earlier in the year he had remarked :

> It is probable that they the Chinese look forward to our re-establishing their authority at Lhasa for them, and I cannot help thinking that it might be worth our while to set Humpty Dumpty of an Amban up again, with a British Officer at his side to keep him upright.[12]

This last hope, however, was much too sanguine, for why with the Dalai Lama out of the way would the Chinese help instal the British at Lhasa ? In the Tibetan game, at least in Chinese eyes, Britain had neutralised any possible danger from Russia and in the process destroyed the greatest obstacle before China, namely, the power of the Lhasa Government.

There was certainly much consistency in Chinese thinking. As early as February 1904, Satow sent a translated enclosure to Curzon from the *Shenpao*, a Chinese newspaper enjoying a wide circulation among the official classes in Peking and elsewhere. The paper observed that despite Tibet being poor and barren, Russia from the north, and Britain from the south, cast covetous eyes towards it. Why ? 'It is not Thibet that they are striving for. India is the point of dispute. Now India is Britain's treasure-house—as rich as Thibet is poor'.[13] An expansionist Russia plunging through Manchuria and Korea found her way barred by Japan, hence she desired to approach India through Tibet, a design which the British frustrated by prompt action in Tibet itself.

The dread of Russia which ranked uppermost in Chinese minds was underlined by Satow's conversations with Na t'ung and T'ang Shao Yi. In their view Britain and China faced a common danger, therefore, Peking could profitably appeal to the British for help. Later in the year the situation had altered in China's favour : Russia embroiled in a conflict with Japan was pre-occupied in another theatre ; the Dalai Lama had fled his country and the repudiation of Curzon meant that the British could also be made to depart. China would thus achieve by diplomacy what she could not possibly achieve through force of arms. As she prepared to do battle around the negotiating table the tactics of her diplomatists were to be based not on appeals, but on forthright pressure, subtly applied.

Having regained their political foothold in Tibet the Chinese aim was to consolidate and, if possible, extend their position. Two overriding considerations determined their attitude towards their dependency : first, Tibet's historic religious and cultural ties with Mongolia where Peking's authority was under threat; second, Tibet provided a defensive shield for China proper, as it did also for India. A Chinese official summed up his country's position succinctly :

> As, moreover, Lhasa is the capital of all Tibet, the home of the cult of Lamaism, the abode of the Imperial Resident, the seat of numberless Buddhist shrines, the rendezvous of all the tribes, it has long been coveted by the British. Tibet, again, is the door that shut off Yunnan and Schuan, and should we prove remiss, the teeth will feel cold when the lips have gone. Any disturbance of her present status would bequeath to us a legacy of deep-seated injury.[14]

Before T'ang Shao Yi reached India, W. F. O'Connor, once Younghusband's Tibetan interpreter and now British Trade Agent at Gyantse, met and conversed with the visiting V. C. Henderson of the Chinese Imperial Maritime and Customs Service, after which he wrote to S. M. Fraser of the Indian Foreign Department forewarning him of the possible Chinese line at the forthcoming talks. 'May I ask you', exclaimed O'Connor,

> to consider this letter as of a confidential nature ?..... as he is now on his way to Calcutta to meet T'ang Shao Yi, I thought it might interest you to hear what transpired. From what he said it appears (from his position at any rate—and this may very possibly reflect that Sir Robert Hart and the Wai-wu-pu) we have not a leg to stand on in making a treaty with Tibet without the full consent to that Treaty of the Suzerain Power—China. I do not, of course, know at all whether the Chinese now mean to try to modify the terms of the Treaty, but at any rate I think from what Henderson said that they do mean to assert themselves now and carry things with a high hand in this country, and I think an effort will be made to get rid of the British Trade Agents.[15]

T'ang arrived in Calcutta in the middle of February 1905. The British delegation, in the absence of L. W. Dane, who was away in Kabul, was led by S. M. Fraser, the Acting Indian

Foreign Secretary, with E. C. Wilton of the China Consular Service in assistance.[16]

In a preliminary conversation with Wilton on 1 March 1905—the day before the official exchange of credentials—T'ang remarked that China could not accept the Lhasa Convention because it had been made without her assent. A further complication was the Chinese plenipotentiary's complaint about the way in which he had been officially received and addressed. He saw it as a slur on his position. T'ang's views were not merely reactive ; he expressed the belief that the head of one of China's provincial administration, say, Szechuan, was equal in status to the Viceroy of India. However, as the Indian Viceroy at the time was Lord Curzon, this essay in correct protocol by the Chinese diplomatist ruled out any chance he may otherwise have had of winning sympathy in the corridors of power in Calcutta. T'ang also talked of taking up an appointment in London—which Wilton correctly interpreted as a veiled threat to transfer the talks there should suitable results not be forthcoming at the Indian capital. Thus, in the months to follow the Chinese stubbornly held out for their sovereign rights in Tibet, while the British with equal persistence insisted that these in practice had amounted to no more than a loose suzerainty.

Having outlined his Government's case to the Acting Indian Foreign Secretary, after the exchange of credentials, T'ang was asked by Fraser to submit an informal draft of China's position to which the British could then reply. He promptly obliged. His draft dated 6 March 1905 bore the title : 'Supplementary Convention to the Convention between Great Britain and the Tibetan Authorities on 7 September 1904', and was centred on three main points : the trade marts established by the Lhasa Convention were accepted by his Government but any modifications in the 1893 Regulations regarding their operation should be left for future Anglo-Chinese discussions, and not for negotiations between Britain and Tibet as envisaged in Article 2 of the Lhasa Convention. Secondly, it stipulated that Tibet's indemnity should be paid by a Tibetan appointed by the Chinese

Amban. Following from this, but of prime significance, was the demand that Article 9 of the Lhasa Convention be clarified by a British denial of interest to encroach or interfere in Tibetan affairs. Furthermore, it was to be stated that the ban on foreign interference encompassed in this article covered all countries including Britain, but excluded China.

Fraser replied verbally. He expressed relief that T'ang's draft was unofficial as otherwise it would have been his unpleasant duty formally to reject it. Asked to elucidate his Government's position Fraser replied by citing the following points : that the British were prepared to recognise China's suzerainty over Tibet ; that in view of Tibet's geographical position relative to India the Chinese Government were expected to recognise that Great Britain among foreign powers had a special interest in Tibetan affairs ; and that so long as no other foreign power endeavoured to interfere in Tibetan matters Britain undertook to refrain from annexing, establishing a Protectorate, or in any way controlling Tibet. As regards Chinese suzerainty, Fraser stated that Britain was not concerned with defining the powers that suzerainty implied—this being a matter for Peking and Lhasa to decide among themselves, but that the British regarded Tibet as an autonomous country, which managed its own administration and made treaties with its neighbours. In other words, Fraser placed clear limits on the suzerainty, whose precise definition he had said he would leave to the Chinese and Tibetans. The substance of sovereignty was to remain with Lhasa, even if its symbols rested in Peking. Nor was this an arbitrary view, for as the Indian Foreign Secretary pointed out, China had conspicuously failed to control her Tibetan dependency since 1890.

T'ang came back vigorously at Fraser. He denied British India's right to a special interest interest in Tibet, claiming that by such logic the French desire to establish a sphere of influence in Yunnan would also have to be conceded. Neither did he take kindly to Fraser's proposal to ban European officials of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service working in Tibet, since he felt it was designed to weaken Chinese influence on the

Indo-Tibetan border where such officials were apt to be firm with their British counterparts.

The deep differences dividing the two sides were further highlighted by the British draft of 26 April 1905, accepting China's suzerainty in Tibet and the Chinese rejoinder of 5 May which rejecting this clause, replaced it with one affirming their sovereign status.

On 5 June, T'ang offered to amend his first Article to read as follows : 'Great Britain recognises the existing authority of China over Tibet'. As Fraser found the change unacceptable it became quite clear that negotiations were in a state of complete deadlock. In July Prince Ch'ing suggested that the venue of the talks be changed to London or Peking. Satow expressed himself against this, as did Curzon who argued in his telegram of 10 July 1905 that failing an agreement with China, Britain should reach a settlement with Tibet alone. He asked further that the British Ambassador draw Chinese attention to the different position they had taken in 1891. On 21 September of that year Mr. James Hart, the Chinese Political Officer, had made the following statement :

> I may also mention that the Tsungli Yamen [Chinese Foreign Office] makes a point of Tibet's condition and says that it is not the same as the Turkestan frontier, Manchuria, or Mongolia which belong to China, but is to be dealt with by China as having something of the simple tributary state in it still.[17]

However, despite this withering blast, Curzon was not entirely unbending. He accepted Satow's suggestion that Article 1 of the British draft of 26 April 1905 affirming China's suzerainty be removed without a substitution being made. The issue of sovereignty or suzerainty would thus be set aside. But China would have to agree to the other provisious contained in the British plan based on a recognition of Tibetan autonomy. It soon became obvious to Satow that Peking was playing for time.

T'ang having pitted his wits against Fraser's may have found the exercise stimulating, but behind the Foreign Secretary stood

the formidable figure of the Viceroy, and eventually the Chinese diplomatist retired from the fray with as much face as he could save, for rarely was a diplomatic illness so opportunely feigned. But the retreat came amid the hopeful news of Curzon's resignation. T'ang having returned to China, his deputy Chang Yin-t'ang took his place. The Chinese continued to stall, hoping, no doubt, for more propitious circumstances after Curzon's departure. This was a Chinese tactic with which the Viceroy had long been familiar. As a young man he had made the following observation on the methods of the Tsungli Yamen later known as the Wai-wu pu :

> The Board is in reality a Board of Delay. Its object is to palaver, and gloze, and promise, and do nothing—an attitude which has been in great favour ever since the notable success after the Tientsin massacres of 1870, when the Chinese by dint of shilly-shallying for several months, till the French were hard pressed in the Franco-German war, escaped very much more lightly than they would otherwise have done. Sir Harry Parkes said that to get a decision from the Tsungli Yamen was like trying to draw water from a well with a bottomless bucket.[18]

However, the British position hardened visibly. The Chinese were asked flatly whether they were prepared to put their signature to a document based on Fraser's draft of 26 April 1905. They demurred. Finally on 15 November 1905 Fraser with calculated abruptness informed Chang that the negotiations were at an end. Two days later Curzon formally handed over charge to Minto.

So ended the first round of the Anglo-Chinese diplomatic struggle. Given the fundamental divergence of views and aims of the parties, its inconclusive end was almost inevitable. Success would have been possible only if the governments of Britain or China were prepared to concede to the other the substance of their principal demands. However, with Curzon at the Viceregal helm, the chances of Britain making such a conciliatory gesture were slim, particularly as the Home Government, having already reversed his Tibetan policy in the interests of better relations with Russia, now seemed content to deny the

Chinese the concessions they sought. In a word, they failed to pursue to its logical end a process they themselves had initiated. Fitful and irresolute, the Cabinet's greatest want was a clarity of purpose. Curzon's mind was, on the other hand, encumbered with few if any doubts. Commenting on China's draft proposals on 13 May 1905 he gave vent to his true feelings: 'I would not budge a single inch, and would personally sacrifice all hope of a Convention with China—to which I attach the minimum of importance—sooner than yield'.[19] It was clear that having been forced to enter such talks against his better judgment, Curzon was not going to bow to Chinese demands. A policy based on uncompromising retreat held no future; only at Lhasa could the problems besetting Anglo-Tibetan relations be successfully resolved.

A more dispassionate view of the considerations underlying the negotiations in Calcutta, one that sets off the somewhat overdrawn assertions of Indian officialdom against the seeming nonchalance of politicians in London by its own admirable balance, was provided by Fraser's adviser on Chinese affairs. The complex interplay of contrasting personalities, the significant points in the negotiations—there was not much that escaped Wilton's shrewd gaze, as his letters to Satow show.

The Indian Foreign Secretary was at first inclined to view his Chinese counterpart as something of a simpleton which, as Wilton feared, was far from true. However, Wilton expressed agreement with the attitude of the Indian Government that neither the Amban nor T'ang was equal in rank to the Viceroy, but he noted that this was not emphasised with any offensiveness. Nevertheless, T'ang took umbrage and was thereafter inclined to display excessive hurt. The Indian Government on the other hand having deluded themselves that negotiations were proceeding smoothly became annoyed when the tortuous methods of the Chinese caused the pace to slacken. 'The ordinary official in India', observed Wilton,

> is so accustomed to dealing with native dignitaries, who are dependents and must disguise antagonistic feelings and ideas, that he is apt to class the Chinese in the same category of

> Orientals. T'ang's manner and methods have irritated Indian officialdom, which seems to prefer dealings with mandarins of the Amban type, possessing polished manners and deportment. I daresay my moral feelings have been blunted but I cannot blame an unscrupulous mandarin, who tries to do the best for his side and incidentally, for himself also.[20]

Nor was he less pointed in his observations on Peking's principal delegate, whose attitude at times bore witness to the reality of timeless China : 'Ridiculous as it may seem', wrote Wilton, 'Mr. T'ang appears to have held the extraordinary idea, peculiar to mandarins no doubt, that he could win over Lord Kitchener by humouring his well-known partiality for Chinese porcelain, and so influence negotiations in his favour'.[21] Finally, the negotiations showed 'that India cannot do without the British Legation in Chinese affairs. They don't like admitting it ; but I cannot at times resist judiciously rubbing the fact into them. I have a great admiration for the work in India of the Indian civilian, but he seems to regard Imperial questions from the most limited point of view'.[22] The limited appreciation of imperial questions was by now becoming a familiar charge. Like the proverbial frog in the well, each arm of the bureaucracy appeared to mistake the patch of blue above for the whole sky.

The clash of personalities and attitudes was clear enough. More interesting perhaps were Wilton's views on the contending policies and the possible course of future developments. Unlike a number of leading Indian frontier officials, he had little faith in the potential of Indo-Tibetan commerce. In his view,

> The main drawback to a big trade with India is that Tibet is a poor sparsely populated region whose inhabitants are separated by enormous barren distances, and with but little transport between her trade centres, which lie in the few comparatively fertile valleys and the Indian frontier. Then also, the Tibetan is a peddler, not a trader. He has not the instincts of trade in him, and the whole of the foreign trade and a considerable portion of local trade is monopolised by outsiders e.g. Nepalese, Kashmiris and Chinese.[23]

However, Wilton detected a desire among those politicals in India interested in Tibet, to substitute Chinese with Indian suzera-

inty, a prospect which held few rewards and endless complications. 'I am afraid', he remarked, 'my views are not at all popular with the Tibet Commission experts ; but a Protectorate being out of the question under existing circumstances, it certainly seems that a policy of peaceful and intelligent penetration, difficult and indefinite as this undoubtedly is, would be the one to best commend itself to our interests'.[24]

With regard to the Chumbi Valley, however, Wilton's views were much in accord with those of India's officials. 'If the Chumbi Valley were taken over altogether', he suggested,

> I do not think that the Tibetans would, at the present time, make the slightest objection. Lhasa, the head and fount of Tibetan politics, does not regard the Chumbi Valley as an integral part of Tibet but really as an adjacent dependency. If the Chinese officials remain on in the Chumbi Valley, and they cannot well be asked to withdraw under existing circumstances, it is to be feared that their bumptiousness will revive, and this may mean complaints and possibly obstruction at Peking to our interests in China.[25]

The uncomplaining acceptance by Lhasa of a change of status of the Valley may too readily have been taken for granted. There was no dearth of protests from the Tibetan authorities at the administrative measures undertaken by the British while in occupation there.[26] Obviously they felt that Britain had annexationist designs. It must be remembered that the Government at Lhasa—which meant the Tibetan Church and lay aristocracy—stood much a lot to gain from the taxes levied on the Chumbi middlemen whose prosperity placed them above the rest of the country. Some among the Tromowas, as the inhabitants of this Valley were called, might have responded positively to the opportunity of sharing in the profitable commerce of British India; others may have feared that their privileged position as carriers of trade would be imperilled as Britain sought direct trade links with Tibet. All would clearly welcome British protection against the depredations of the Bhutanese.[27]

There were other advantages to be had from taking over the Chumbi Valley. For one thing it would save Britain the trouble of posting Trade Agents in Tibet and so save her much inter-

national bother. Take the Chumbi and leave Tibet to its own devices was Wilton's message.

Nevertheless, leaving aside the use of such concrete terms as protectorate and suzerainty, the outcome of the Calcutta negotiations, according to him, would determine which of the two, China or Britain, would have the predominant position in Tibet. Hence the prospect of seeing Peking's mediatory role between Tibet and India abolished would

> be a pill too big to pass the Chinese gullet. There is no doubt whatever that it would be a blow to her dwindling prestige and a corresponding enhancement of ours in Tibet. The Lhasa Authorities have been abiding the outcome of the T'ang negotiations with intense anxiety; swayed at one moment, by the honeyed lies of the Amban who has been telling them that, just as his representatives induced the Emperor of China to force us to forego 50 lakhs of the indemnity, so T'ang Tachen [Chinese honorific meaning literally Great Man] has orders to compel us to give up the trade marts and to substitute the Yatung Convention for the Lhasa Treaty, they have become truculent and overbearing in manner; then the rememberance of British troops in the Potala awakens them with a shock and they cringe and whine that they are weak and poor.[28]

Assessing the future course of developments, Wilton suggested that in the eventuality of the Chinese rejecting the British draft Convention the Viceroy should be 'prepared to recommend doing without the Lhasa Treaty and to adopt an unobtrusive but vigorous policy in Tibet. This is difficult but quite feasible, given good men and adequate funds: and India appears to be lacking in neither respect'.[29] If the Consular Official imagined that he was anticipating events he was wrong, for such developments were already under way. Early in January 1905, W. F. O'Connor, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse invited the Tibetan Shapes, with whom he established a considerable rapport, to Calcutta, where trade with India could be formally regularised and they could become acquainted with the Viceroy to their mutual benefit. He was proposing to take advantage of the fact that Government's decision to reduce the indemnity was warmly appreciated at Lhasa. And with Charles

Bell administering the Chumbi Valley on more enlightened principles than had hitherto been the case, the first step in the peaceful penetration of Tibet seemed well under way. The Tibetans sensed that they could lose the Chumbi, and Bell's measures therefore became a contentious issue in Anglo-Tibetan correspondence. Indeed, Brodrick had felt impelled to remind India of the 'necessity of avoiding language which could be construed as inconsistent with the recognition of the Chumbi Valley as part of Tibet'.[30]

Nothing daunted, Indian frontier officials continued to advocate the cause of Indo-Tibetan commerce.[31] To them it was a case of the flag following trade, hence the peaceful penetration of Tibet became their refrain.

As if this were not enough, the energetic O'Connor soon thrust deep into the heart of Tibetan politics. The Panchen Lama had appealed to the British for protection against the encroaching authority of Lhasa, and although the Trade Agent listened to him with sympathy he outlined the consequences of such support with scrupulous care. 'In these circumstances', he telegraphed,

> if Government are prepared to make definite promise to Lama to protect him against any attempt at vengence on the part of Lhassa Government, I am of opinion that civilities on our part are distinctly advisable, including an invitation to visit Calcutta··· Failing such a guarantee, it would not be fair to Lama to ask him to compromise himself with us in anymarked manner nor do I think he would care himself to do so.[32]

White, however, on his own authority asked O'Connor to emphasise to the Panchen Lama that the invitation to visit Calcutta in the winter of 1905-06 must be accepted without reference to Peking, and that in view of his difficult relations with Lhasa it was in his interest to do do.[33] When the papers were put up before the Government for official sanction White omitted to incude in the file O'Connor's telegram of 25 June (1905) pointing out the consequences of such action. For this the Political Officer was to earn a severe reprimand from his superiors who were being subjected to new pressures arising out of the change of regime at Whitehall.[34]

Having proceeded as advised, O'Connor was soon revealing a bolder hand. China's power in Tibet might be a delusion but her prestige at the Panchen Lama's capital was high, as the use of Chinese ritual and ceremony in state and political functions clearly showed. Thus, according to his reasoning, the Lama's journey to India without Chinese permission would provoke swift retribution from Peking. To save their protegé from punishment, would it not be better to post a British Agent at Shigatse instead of Gyantse, as was the case at present? It is doubtful if O'Connor really believed in China's capacity to move seriously—as opposed to temporary harassment—against the Tibetan hierarch. O'Connor's own assessment had an obvious flaw: while on the one hand Chinese power was a delusion, the existence of Chinese influence in court ritual showed that it was not. Had not O'Connor and his confréres often in the past sought to convince their superiors—and with good reason—of China's utter helplessness in Tibet? His true reasons were part of the wider considerations he had in mind. A British Agent at Shigatse would not contravene, in his view, the provisions of the Lhasa Treaty which, indeed, had provided for the opening of fresh trade marts should developments require it. And Shigatse, he argued, was far more important as a centre of commerce than Gyantse. Moreover, the Panchen Lama and his circle were unfeignedly pro-British. 'There still remains the question', concluded O'Connor with much candour,

> whether such expenditure should be justified by political advantages which we would secure by taking the Lama under our protection. It is, I think, clear that our only security against the intrigues of Foreign Powers in Tibet would be the establishment of an Agent at Lhasa itself. Failing this, the best we can hope for is to safeguard that part of Tibet bordering upon India from foreign influences. [An Agent at Shigatse] would be a substantial gain, and would place us in a position to checkmate effectively any forward policy directed from the north upon Lhasa and the friendly states lying between Tibet and India. In a word, it would definitely attain the object aimed at in the recent Tibet Mission, which, as things are at present, has not been secured. The cost would be trifling; and as our prestige gradually increased, the necessity for the expenditure would

> diminish. Hence seize the present favourable opportunity for cementing our friendship with the Tashi Lama, even going as far if necessary, as to subsidise him and protect him and to open, under the terms of the Lhasa Convention, a new trade mart at Shigatse. And let it be clearly understood that any intrigues of other Foreign Powers would be met by a corresponding extension of our influence in the province of Tsang and Southern Tibet. And all this might be done without openly impugning or infringing Chinese suzerainty.[35]

Whatever O'Connor's plans, it would have been naive to suppose that the Chinese would accept in silence such a patent erosion of the shadowy authority they still possessed. Indeed, the breakdown of the negotiations at Calcutta had made them more alert. They were soon informing Satow that the Panchen Lama derived his title and position from the Chinese Emperor and that his status was purely spiritual. 'We suppose', said the note from Peking,

> that this present visit to India is being undertaken with a view to offering congratulations to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, who it is understood, will shortly arrive in India. The Lama has however no concern whatever with the external affairs of Tibet, and if he takes upon himself to discuss or settle any questions of a business nature, we have the honour to state explicitly that Chinese Government will in no way recognise this action.[36]

Meanwhile, towards the end of 1905, Lord Minto had taken over as the new Viceroy. Descended from a family of patrician Whigs, he had seen active service under Roberts in India, and had fought with the Turks against Russia (which experience left in him a fellow feeling for the Ottomans as much as a deep antipathy towards Russia); while in his most recently held office, that of Governor-General of Canada, he learnt some of the technicalities of public administration in a parliamentary system of Government.[37]

Minto had no lack of powerful advocates, one of whom, Lansdowne, held the Prime Minister's ear. In the course of a fervent appeal to Balfour, he shed a few revealing shafts of light on the qualities required by the head of an Indian Administration. Thus, Minto

> has plenty of nerve and good sense, is as true as steel and will be absolutely loyal to His Majesty's Government. He is a gentleman to the tips of his nails, and will be loved by the natives and particularly by the native chiefs who will appreciate his charm of manner and his fine horsemanship. [Not least] he has a clever and hardworking little wife, who will undo some of the mischief which I fear has been done by Lady C [Curzon], who in spite of her attractiveness has I fancy rubbed a good many people the wrong way.[38]

Lansdowne's pleading letters to Minto on behalf of his son who appeared to be having little success in his courtship of the future Viceroy's daughter lent spice to this eulogy. However, matters were soon put right ; the young man's affections were reciprocated and the marriage that happily followed drew the Lansdownes and the Mintos into a closer bond of political friendship.

In December 1905 Parliament was dissolved, and in the General Election that followed, the Conservatives were heavily defeated. Grey took over the reins at the Foreign Office while John Morley became the new Secretary of State for India. One of the leading Liberals of his day, a writer and thinker of distinction, Morley was, in Lovat Fraser's words, "certainly the most autocratic and the least constitutional Secretary of State ever seen in Whitehall'.[39] He was in thought and spirit the very antithesis of Curzon. Where Curzon's imperialism was kept buoyant by hopes of a future partnership between Britain and her dependencies, Morley's view of the Empire was rooted in pessimism.[40] But if the former Viceroy's imperial dreams failed to inspire, neither did any Radical zeal hold him in thrall. Morley was if anything a 'Little Englander' ; a utilitarian with an abiding faith in financial thrift, a suspicion of foreign entanglements on the ground that they led to unnecessary expense ; a man for whom India—despite fleeting moments of awe at the majesty of the British achievement—occupied only the periphery of his political horizon. On occasion he grumbled at this encumbrance yet it never crossed his mind to rid Britain of its weight. The truth is that Morley probably wanted an Empire on the cheap.[41] His outlook and policy mirrored

what Marx in his study of Palmerston called the 'shams and contradictions of Whiggism.'

There could be few illusions about what the new Secretary of State expected of the Indian Viceroy. 'The Indian Viceroy' he wrote, 'is not bound to know political philosophy or juristic theory or constitutional history; he is first and foremost an administrator, and the working head of a complicated civil and military service'.[42] After the exalted view Curzon held of this office, Morley's was little short of an anti-climax.

However, Lord Minto fitted Morley's requirements. He had: 'an ample supply of constancy and good-humour.....His vision was not subtle, but, what is far better it was remarkably shrewd!'[43]. The suspicion that Morley had less than a deep regard for the Viceroy's intellect is borne out by a letter he wrote to Hardinge in 1911 after one of Minto's parliamentary perorations:

> He may depend upon it that his political friends here won't be in a hurry to lose Lancashire seats by picking up their crumbs from his not over intellectually replenished board. I had a little chat with him the other night at the House of Lords, and there was something pathetic in the simplicity with which he bemoaned the comparative obscurity in which he now finds himself.[44]

Thus, Minto, useful to Morley in India, was on his return, little more than a pathetic discard, cruelly alone.

While in opposition the Liberals had led the outcry against the Indian Government's Tibetan policies. They had approved Lansdowne's diplomatic approaches to France and Russia. The *Entente Cordiale* was complete when the new Liberal Cabinet took charge but there was nothing in the way to prevent a resumption of serious conversations between London and St. Petersburg. It was strong and confident where its predecessor had been weak and lacking in direction. Furthermore, its two principal Civil Service advisers were wholly committed to the policy of achieving better relations with Russia. Hardinge, a protegé of Edward VII, had done useful work at St. Petersburg, first as Counsellor, then as Ambassador. Like his sovereign he was deeply suspicious of Germany. His close friend and

colleague, Arthur Nicolson, shared his views.[45] Nicolson's experience as head of the British delegation to the Algeciras Conference on Morocco had confirmed his own long-standing distrust of the German leaders. On returning home he was appointed Hardinge's successor at St. Petersburg, while Hardinge became Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office in January 1906.[46] The man under whom they served was Edward Grey, distinguished for his honesty and integrity rather brilliance of mind. Together they formed a closely knit team.

It was commonly believed that Britain was, naturally, averse to the existense of a strong group of powers in Europe. Grey sought to dispel this notion. Was not Britain at one time inclined favourably towards the Triple Alliance led by Germany? Did she not regard France and Russia as the weaker but more restless nations? In fact Britain had not been hostile to the

> predominance of a strong group in Europe when it seemed to make for stability and peace. To support such a combination has generally been her first choice; it is only when the dominant Power becomes aggressive and she feels her own interests to be threatened that she, by an instinct of self-defence, if not by deliberate policy, gravitates to anything that can fairly be described as a Balance of Power.[47]

Germany was now the restless Power.[48] The naval rivalry with England and the Moroccan crisis were but two recent manifestations of her aggressive self-assertion. Even far off Tibet did not escape her attention as Lansdowne noted bitterly in a letter to Sir F. Lascelles, the British Ambassador at Berlin.[49]

In the light of these uncertain developments, it became imperative for Britain to reach an understanding with Russia. But the first step to such an end had to be an Anglo-Chinese agreement on Tibet. Such an accord would be an earnest of British good faith and a redemption of past pledges to St. Petersburg. The Foreign Office and the India Office worked in harness in pursuit of this goal. The Government of India, with due constitutional propriety, made occasional observations from the sidelines, which apart from provoking the Secretary of State to react with amusement or irritation achieved little else.

The deadlocked talks with China were re-opened early in January 1906 at Peking, thus fulfilling a cherished Chinese aim. While once again T'ang Shao-yi led his country's delegation, the British side this time was under the charge of Sir Ernest Satow. Satow communicated directly with the Foreign Office in London, with the Indian Government making their points view in muted tones. Their voice, however, was not entirely unheeded. For though it is true that Simla's request that the British Ambassador press for a Chinese assurance to exclude the Dalai Lama from Tibet be written into the Treaty was rejected as impracticable,[50] their suggestion that the issue of China's European employees in Tibet be resolved through an exchange of notes to be attached to the Treaty found eventual acceptance. The needs of British security and Chinese pride having been met, Peking was given a year in which to remove people like Henderson from Tibet.

The Foreign Office on their part sought to rephrase Article 4 of the same draft so that it would accord with the spirit of Lansdowne's assurance to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires on 27 April 1904 that Article 9(d) of the Lhasa Convention was a self-denying ordinance. Otherwise, they feared, Russia might suspect that Britain, with China's connivance, had reserved special rights for herself in Tibet.[51]

The negotiations were brisk and business-like ; the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 27 April 1906 testified to the urgent desire of both parties to arrive at a quick settlement. The Treaty consisted of six articles of which it would be appropriate to mention the first three. The opening article confirmed the Lhasa Convention, subject to any alterations in the present agreement. Article 2 was as follows :

> The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign state to interfere in the territorial administration of Tibet.[52]

Article 3, rephrased by the Foreign Office, read thus :

> The concessions which are mentioned in Article 9(d) of the

> Convention concluded on 7th September, 1904, by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any state or to the subject of any state other than China, but it has been arranged with China that at the trade marts specified in Article 2 of the aforesaid Convention Great Britaln shall be entitled to lay down telegraph lines into India. 53

For Peking, the Convention turned out to be a signal triumph; a recognition from Britain of its exclusive rights in Tibet without the formal acceptance of Chinese sovereignty over the country.

However, the Chinese were as anxious as the British to get an agreement. The Russians, for one thing, were engaged elsewhere; but of more immediate importance was the serious erosion of their own power in Eastern Tibet.[54] Indeed, one reason why the Home Authorities instructed the Indian Government to withdraw their application to Lhasa for a passport for E. C. Wilton's projected overland journey from India to China was because the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, through which he would have to pass, were in a dangerously unsettled state. Small wonder that the Convention of 1906 proved such a boon for Peking.

Fraser, on account of his inexperience had attached greater weight to T'ang Shao-yi's bluster in Calcutta than the situation warranted. He readily accepted the view formed, no doubt, by the spectacle of Chinese dilatoriness, that China was not unduly keen to reach a settlement.[55] Assuming that T'ang believed his own fanciful assertions of Chinese power in Tibet, or was even serious in his expressed intention to visit Lhasa, those Chinese officials with first-hand knowledge of the Tibetan situation, particularly in the troubled areas of the East, must have been less sanguine about China's ability to retain political control. They were likely to have made known their doubts and fears to the Wai-wu pu.

The fact that Chang Yin-t'ang, T'ang Shao-yi's replacement, remained in Calcutta long after the Indian Government had broken off negotiations was as much a sign of China's concern at the possibility that the decision could become irrevocable, as a symbol of hope for their eventual resumption. Secondly, Satow himself noted that Prince Ch'ing had once

preferred to send T'ang Shao-yi to Calcutta rather than face him as a negotiator—presumably, because with his immense experience of China, he would prove uncomfortably wise to the ways of Chinese diplomacy—but with T'ang having failed, 'it seems that both he and the Prince are inclined to fall back on me after all. It was a pleasant surprise to find them actually coming forward with written proposals, which might with certain changes be safely accepted as it seems to me. With the Chinese it is often best to play a waiting game as it is impossible to hustle them.'[56] When the spirit moved them, they were capable of showing a sense of urgency. Their authority in Eastern Tibet continued to wane, and now that her war with Japan was over, Russia was free to resume her unwelcome attentions on China. Even more ominous from Peking's point of view was the possibility that Tokyo and St. Petersburg would give serious thought to an understanding on their respective spheres of interest in the Far East.

In order, therefore, to put the British in good humour, T'ang gave Satow a firm verbal assurance 'that the Dalai Lama would not be allowed to return to Lhasa for the present, and I think it not unlikely', remarked the British Ambassador, 'that in this matter the Chinese Government are sincere, as they cannot wish him to be re-established there under the protection of a Russian Guard'.[57] But although assuaging some of the fears of the British Government, this concession in no way stemmed from any generosity on China's part, as her suspicions of the Dalai Lama were as keen as those of India's officials. Only with the passage of time did they perceive that it was China who was the principal cause of his concern.

However, on the eve of the second round of Anglo-Chinese negotiations, the Panchen Lama in response to the official invitation of the previous Viceroy, arrived in India in December 1905, travelling through Agra, Rawalpindi, Benaras, Gaya, before reaching Calcutta on Boxing Day, where he was accorded the honours normally reserved for a ruling chief. Morley viewed these developments with disapproval and concern. 'With a good deal of dismay', he wrote to Minto,

> I have been studying the papers of your guest today, the Tashi Lama. The invitation to him to visit Calcutta seems to have been given without any notification to His Majesty's Government here and Captain O'Connor's letter to White of the 23rd November opens a most unpleasant vista of possible obligations and responsibilities, of an extremely familiar stamp ··· Any such action as our giving the Tashi Lama a title and a subsidy, or anything else to be called "moral support", would of course excite resentment not only in Lhasa, but at Pekin, and we should ourselves be involved—by a thoroughly well known process—in any quantity of possible troubles.[58]

The Secretary of State's apprehensions were not without foundation, for in a conversation with Minto the Panchen Lama made three demanding requests : First, that he be furnished with a written undertaking of British support in case of an attack by China on Lhasa ; second, that in such an eventuality, he would be supplied with an adequate quantity of firearms, and third, that the British officer at Gyantse be empowered to forward his letters to the Government of India at Calcutta. Only the last of these proved acceptable to the Viceroy, but for Morley this episode while underlining the danger of an unnecessary political entanglement also confirmed his poor opinion of Indian frontier officials.

In matters of external policy at least, the Secretary of State left the Viceroy in no doubt as to where the ultimate power of decision lay. When Minto suggested that India should be consulted during the forthcoming talks on Anglo-Japanese relations, he was firmly put in his place. 'This would', observed Morley in reply,

> involve a three-cornered correspondence between London, Tokyo and Calcutta that would certainly hamper, complicate, and retard the progress of negotiations. Nobody will be more ready and determined than I to uphold the rights and status of India in imperial affairs—or to resist the imposition upon Indian finance of charges that ought to be regarded as imperial and not Indian. In all these things you will find me as jealous as anybody could desire. But the Cabinet would certainly take fright at any language or act of ours pointing to the Curzonian direction, by seeming to set up, either at the conferences at Tokyo or elsewhere, the Govern-

ment of India as a sort of Great Power on its own account. I don't believe there is a trace of such thought in your mind but it may well be that the intoxicating fumes of the late regime may still hang about your Council Chamber.[59]

In July that year—by which time Nicolson had taken up his appointment as British Ambassador at St. Petersburg and the much hoped Anglo-Russian conversations had commenced—Morley returned to the subject with even greater vigour. The Viceroy and his advisers had been asked for their views on Afghanistan in order that Nicolson could be adequately briefed on the subject. Instead, 'You say', wrote the Secretary of State to Minto,

> If we are to enter on an *entente* with Russia let us bargain with her elsewhere than in Central Asia. But then this was not the question laid before you...An *entente* with Russia that should leave out Central Asia would be a sorry trophy of our diplomacy indeed. Anyhow, His Majesty's Government have determined on their course, and it is for their agents and officers all over the world to accept it. If there is one among them to whom it would be more idle to repeat this a b c of the Constitution...you are that man...The plain truth is...that this country cannot have two foreign policies. The Government of India in Curzon's day, and in days before Curzon, tried to have its own foreign policy. My nervous mind sees the same spectre lurking behind the phrase about "full consultation". I note a phrase in Lord Kitchener's letter—"a railway policy which we in common with His Majesty's Government have been consistenly following" etc. Quite harmless, but with a possible implication that "we" and His Majesty's Government are two independent though friendly Powers. Nothing but confusion, trouble, and danger attended the attempt to realise this sort of vision in Curzon's case, and so in my most deliberate opinion the same mischiefs always must attend the same dreams.[60]

A deal with Russia that excluded Central Asia could scarcely be called a settlement at all, and Morley, predictably, fastened on to Minto's inane suggestion with relish. Curzon might be faulted for his inflexible attitude towards Russia; nevertheless when he did contemplate an understanding with her, it was based on realistic geographical and territorial alignments. He looked at the frontiers of India with the

gaze of a Proconsular statesman. His successor's hostility to Russia, on the other hand, sprang largely from a romantic attachment to the Ottomans : neither in thought nor deed did Minto's spirit threaten to stray beyond its accustomed limits.

Meanwhile, within Tibet, Chinese and British officials began to jockey for positions of power and privilege. Among the former were Chang Yin-t'ang, once T'ang Shao-yi's deputy at the Calcutta talks, now Imperial Commissioner at Lhasa ; and his assistant Gow who, at Gyantse, pitted himself against O'Connor. The other British principals were C.A. Bell, under whose administrative charge lay the Chumbi Valley, F.M. Bailey, O'Connor's temporary replacement, and W.L. Campbell, the Assistant Political Officer, Sikkim.

The Chinese were determined to extract the maximum leverage from the Peking convention, for even where British officials were allowed by treaty to deal directly with Tibetans it was China's aim to interpose herself as an intermediary and so reduce such rights to a bare formality. Such pretensions, were vigorously contested by the representatives of the Indian Government who, nurtured as they were on Curzonian values, found it difficult to reconcile themselves to a retreat from traditional British aims. Nor was their attitude without an element of legitimate concern, for while the Peking Convention had conceded much to China, it had stopped short of acknowledging Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. Indeed, its first Article which upheld the main body of the Lhasa Agreement, underlined Britain's acceptance of Chinese suzerainty, and was reciprocated by a recognition of British interest in Tibet in the light of its geographic proximity to India. Writing of the Anglo-Chinese Convention shortly after its ratification, Satow remarked :

> The really important article in it seems to me the first, by which it is agreed that both parties shall see to the enforcement of the Lhasa Convention, as it emphasises the joint interests that Great Britain and China have in Tibet.[61]

Whatever the similarity in political grammar, the underlying

spirit of the Lhasa and Peking Conventions could hardly have been more opposed : the first laid emphasis on the direct relationship between Britain and Tibet ; the second, despite its first article, sought to relegate such ties to a subordinate status within the wider context of Anglo-Chinese relations. Of the two treaties the ambiguities of the Peking Convention were more pronounced ; nevertheless, these might have remained academic if the document as a whole had conveyed a similar meaning to both the parties. As this clearly was not the case, its basic flaws were to be exposed time and again : and never more so than in Tibet itself.

The Chinese, under the directing hand of Chang Yin-t'ang remained true to their goal of reducing and, if possible, ridding Tibet of all British influence. Whether haggling over a pettifogging detail concerning treaty rights or questioning a procedural point, their aim was to augment China's prestige and authority within the country.

To Bell, Chang's overbearing behaviour was a Chinese ploy to assert their authority in the Chumbi Valley, then under British occupation. The Imperial Resident for his part resented the arrogance of Campbell, the senior British official. There was perhaps a certain irony about a situation in which the representative of one imperial power found the arrogance of the other galling. Bazaar gossip was soon afloat that Chang was going to eject European and Indian troops from Gyantse ; that he was proceeding to have Campbell removed from his post, and that if the Indian Government refused to comply with his demands, China would expel the British by force.[62] These rumours were, no doubt, circulated by the Chinese in order to impress the Tibetans. Imperial prestige was as necessary to China as it was to Britain.

This initial cut and thrust was complemented by Chinese moves on the ground. At Gyantse, Gow made it his business to harry and question the British representative whenever the latter sought to deal directly with the Tibetans, insisting that the Jongpons (local officials) consult him first even on the most trivial issues. He also accused the British of attempting to

exploit the Tibetans by under-paying them for goods and services.[63]

The fact that the Jongpons had complained to Gow about British attempts at price fixing made Bailey believe that they were also encouraging the Chinese official to exact exorbitant rates from him. The Tibetans were indeed playing off British against Chinese. China may have wanted to assert her presence in the Chumbi in order to enhance her political stature in Tibet as a whole; but the Tibetan stakes though less grandiose were more specific—to regain control of this important valley. Lhasa was afraid that its occupation by the British, professedly temporary, could become permanent.[64]

British explanations must have failed to alleviate Lhasa's suspicions; and noting that their occupation of the Chumbi had still two more years to run, the Tibetans were probably glad to avail themselves of the opportunity of using Gow as a battering ram against Indian officials whose presence made them obvious objects of attention. The Tibetans showed their hand even more clearly when O'Connor in January 1907 returned to his post. The Jongpons expressed their pleasure at seeing him again (he spoke their language fluently and his pro-Tibetan sympathies were by now common knowledge), and agreed when questioned that relations between themselves and the British Trade Agents had been satisfactory until Mr. Chang had arrived on the scene. The Chinese official had proceeded to inform them that from now on all outstanding questions between the British and Tibetans were to be placed before his representatives. Somewhat apologetically, the Jongpons went on to plead their inability to disobey Chang, and, as such, said they would deal with the British through Gow. O'Connor replied by producing a copy of the Lhasa Convention, the relevant extracts of which he read out, but with little effect it would seem, for the Tibetans with a well timed turn of the screw recalled China's insistence that Britain recognise her sovereignty in Tibet.[65] The veiled irony of this response could not have been lost on the British official who, in the months ahead, had increasing cause to ruminate over the wisdom of his Government's Tibetan policy.

In a response to these developments, Morley favoured a representation to China though in a milder form than that urged by the Government of India.[66] While it was in order to re-state such rights as had been obtained by Britain in Tibet, the Secretary of State recognised the implications of the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of April 1906, in the following words :

> But the principle has been recognised that, provided nothing is done either by the Tibetan and Chinese authorities to impair these privileges, the British Government are precluded by the terms of the convention from interfering, even if they had the desire to do so, with Chinese action in Tibet.[67]

However, promises made in Peking, where the Wai-wu pu repeatedly affirmed its recognition of the British right to communicate directly with the Tibetans, and undertook to inform its agents accordingly, were rarely fulfilled in Tibet; thus the hope that China would appreciate the extreme mildness of Whitehall's protest by stopping the harassment of British officials in Tibet proved illusory. Relations between Gow and O'Connor progressively deteriorated during the first half of 1907 when the Chinese successfully cut off the British official from all contact with the Tibetans. Complaints poured in from the Trade Agency at Gyantse, but Morley in London, commented sagely to the Viceroy that, 'what is needed is to work through the Chinese Government. I should be glad to know what measures O'Connor proposes to take and trust he will do nothing without reference to you'.[68] Eventually, with civilized intercourse between the British and Chinese officials in a state of near collapse the Foreign Office successfully prevailed upon Peking to recall Gow in the larger interest of their mutual relations.[69] His transfer, however, was in no sense a disgrace, for in appreciation of the persistence with which he had stuck to his unpleasant task, his superiors in Peking appointed him Director of Telegraphs at Mukden.

There was also during this period, a moment or two of high drama in the exchanges between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Minto's expression of regret at Britain's

declining reputation in Tibet brought this waspish rejoinder from Morley :

> When you speak of the loss of British prestige in Tibet as being deplorable, you do not recognise, do you ? —that the present Government here, just like our predecessor, regard Curzon's Tibet policy as hugely mistaken. At least one commercial expert assures me that the trade of Tibet is moonshine. Anyhow, our policy is not to act as if we meant to hold on Tibet. This is what O'Connor and your Foreign Department do not realise. The other day one of your Tibetan despatches—with a dreadful reek of the old policy about it—almost provoked me to an extremely unofficial explosion. Happily it was followed by a more reasonable performance.[70]

If the Secretary of State stayed the Viceroy's hand, it was because he and his Cabinet collegues believed that the demands of Britain's global interests had to be accorded pride of place. The Indian frontiersmen, he complained, 'wear blinkers and forget the complex intrigues, rival interests, and, if you like, diabolic machinations, that make up international politics for a vast sprawling Empire like ours, exposing more vulnerable surface than any Empire the world ever saw'.[71]

As the shadow of Germany lengthened, British diplomacy revealed an impressive form. In the East its linchpin was Japan ; in the West it was France. Between the two lay the land mass of Russia. With French encouragement, London and St. Petersburg had commenced conversations on their outstanding differences. But the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War and the progressive deterioration of Russia's military position interrupted these discussions, with Russian public opinion, for a time, turning violently against Britain on account of her ties with Japan. British ministers wisely kept their heads in the hope that the storm would pass and Anglo-Russian relations soon be blessed with a fairer wind. There was a Palmerstonian echo in Lansdowne's comment to Hardinge shortly after the conclusion of Russo-Japanese hostilities : 'If Japan is now regarded as a friend of Russia, is there any reason why Great Britain should not be so regarded.....'[72] In other words, there were no permanent villains in British diplomacy, only permanent interests.

As an earnest of his Government's good faith Lansdowne sent a copy of the second Anglo-Japanese Treaty of September 1905 to the Russian Ambassador, even before its official publication, with the observation

> that it is framed in accordance with principles to which we are all of us committed, and may I add that it contains nothing to prevent Russia and Great Britain from resuming the friendly examination of those important questions which you and I were discussing when the war so unfortunately interrupted our deliberations.[73]

For Britain the war had, by bringing Russia sharply to heel, served its purpose: the Tsar and his ministers might now be more accommodating. A prolonged conflict could not only prove ruinous for both combatants but also defeat one of the principal ends of British policy. Hardinge put the matter well:

> How wise the Japanese have been in making peace instead of exhausting themselves by a long war with nothing to be got from it that they have not already obtained. Their value to us as allies might have been much depreciated and they have now plenty of occupation for themselves in Korea for a long time to come.[74]

Any possibility of a permanent Russo-German combination directed against Britain—a cherished dream of the Kaiser's—was put paid to in the Balkans where Berlin remained firm in its support of its Austrian ally; and in the Near East where it increasingly exploited the weakness of the Ottoman rulers for its own ends. The secret Bjorko alliance of July 1905 between William and Nicholas foundered on the objections of Russia's principal ally, and Germany's chief adversary, France.[75] The Treaty was thus stillborn, as the Tsar found it impossible to ride two horses at once. His French connection was vital to the economic well being of his country which, since 1890, had come to depend on large financial loans raised in Paris. And with the conflict with Japan over a month later, Russia's expenses proved, at first count, to be very heavy indeed—a severe financial drain coupled with economic instability and growing social unrest. The need for foreign borrowing remained as acute as ever. Only France could supply

the necessary funds. At the Algeciras Conference, called to discuss the Moroccan crisis early in 1906, Russia dutifully lined up with Britain in support of the French. Their united stand forced Berlin to give way. Nine days after the proceedings were concluded, Russia was rewarded with a loan of over two billion francs from Paris.[76]

The hour for which British statesmen had been hoping at last arrived. Grey was

> impatient to see Russia re-established as a factor in European politics. Whether we shall get an arrangement with her about Asiatic questions remains to be seen : I will try when she desires it and is ready, and till she is ready we do not wish to change the situation in Persia or elsewhere.[77]

Russia was now prepared to talk seriously about reaching an accommodation. In the Far East Japan had put a brake on Russia's progress; in the Balkans Austria barred the way; in the Dardanelles it was Turkey; and behind both loomed the power of Germany. The Russian army was exhausted; Russia's economic development gravely interrupted, while the 1905 uprising revealed deep, half-hidden currents which threatened, the social fabric. Moreover, negotiations could bring valuable political and territorial gains. If Tokyo and St. Petersburg, could in a spirit of compromise discuss the possibility of an understanding on their spheres of influence in Northern China, there was no reason why talks with Britain should not bring similar dividends. Here, furthermore, was the prospect of an added bonus in the shape of loans raised on the London stock exchange to help a sorely pressed Government with its schemes for the industrialisation of the country.[78]

With Germany its principal pre-occupation the major goals of British diplomacy were now in Europe. Commenting on the factors which drove the British forward, Beryl Williams observes :[79]

> The urgency came not only from the international situation but also from the realities which were revealed to the Liberals of Britain's military and naval positions. These affected both the potential role of holder of the balance of power in Europe against Germany and more immediately her ability

to defend her Empire against possible Russian aggression. It was brought home to the Government that Britain was no longer able to meet all her commitments. By January 1907 the General Staff and Admiralty had agreed that it was no longer possible to hold the Straits alone against Russia. Grey urged the necessity of keeping this information secret.

Russia also brought up the question of the Straits, which Grey promised to consider sympathetically in the future, if the current arrangement in Asia worked well. Williams again: 'that the matter of the Straits was raised shows the European implications of what purported to be merely a settlement on the Indian frontier against its many critics with the argument that it was intended "to begin an understanding with Russia which may lead to good relations in European questions also".[80] Sanderson, Hardinge's predecessor at the Foreign Office summed it up well: 'the process of working in constant antagonism', 'is too expensive'.[81] In view of the international situation, problems which had lain dormant assumed a fresh dimension. Balfour had set up a committee to review questions of Imperial defence. The military resources currently available to the Empire were considered inadequate; the crucial case of India being particularly acute, especially when it is recalled that the Indian Army in addition to manning the frontiers of the Subcontinent was also expected to be a bulwark against internal uprisings. Lord Roberts had advocated the introduction of universal military service, citing the examples of France, Germany and Japan[82] but his proposal failed to find favour with Balfour.

A possible alternative would be to raise the strength of the Indian Army on the basis of Indian resources alone but this would add to the country's existing burden and lead to even greater mass unrest. The political upsurge following the partition of Bengal in 1905 had convulsed key areas of India and drawn in considerable sections of the educated classes.[83] To the guardians of the Raj these developments were the source of grave foreboding; hence a diplomatic arrangement with Russia which would lessen some of the external pressures became a vital necessity.

Economic considerations complemented political and stra-

tegic needs, for the Russian market offered sizeable rewards to British capital : a far flung empire, rich in raw materials, seeking to develop its industries and railways, yet unable to achieve these goals without the aid of foreign money and technology. 'I need hardly tell you', observed Nicholson to Hardinge. 'that the resources of Russia are enormous, varied and most valuable—and will afford a splendid field for English enterprise'.[84] Three years later he was harping on the same theme :

> Schemes are afloat for diverting the Oxus, irrigating deserts, and making Turkestan a great cotton growing territory. These are not visions – but projects seriously entertained and likely to be realised in some form or another. Both Siberia and Turkestan have a very great future before them—and will be splendid markets for us—if our people would only bestir themselves a little more. I hope the visit here next month of delegates from several of our Chambers of Commerce, London, Liverpool, Hull, Bristol etc. will do good.[85]

Meanwhile Grey was ready to bestow the unofficial blessings of the Foreign Office on the projected Anglo-Russian bank. 'We would not' he remarked, 'discourage it in any way, because we were now on friendly terms with the Russian Government, and the employment of British capital in Russia on good security and in co-operation with Russian enterprise, would naturally lead to good relations between the two countries and be welcome to us'.[86]

But however compelling these larger factors the lingering suspicions and jealousies of a life time remained an obstacle to mutual trust and goodwill. Russia, a semi-medieval autocracy often spoke with many voices. Possessing at first neither a popular representative assembly nor democratic institutions of any sort, the politics of her ruling class were mainly factional.

People like Witte, with their sound grasp of economic and social problems, mixed uneasily with militarists, arch reactionaries and charlatans of every kind. The intelligentsia, tarred by the brush of treason by successive Tsars, had no role in society except as adversaries of the monarchy ; while the peasantry, poor, and mostly illiterate, were little more than

hewers of wood and drawers of water. Heading this rickety structure was the 'all powerful' Tsar, the last European monarch to clain his throne on the basis of Divine Right: weak of character, a willing prey to the fantasies of those nearest him, unreliable in temperament, but a political influence of the first magnitude.

It was not the military power of Russia that Britain now feared but the inherent lack of stability which threatened her credibility as a diplomatic and military ally.[87] It was indeed a British hope that the newly constituted Russian Duma, a popular Assembly grudgingly conceded by the Tsar following the abortive uprising of 1905, would grow in strength, and stem the tide of revolution.

Not least of the many problems of dealing with Russia was the vanity of its crowned head. Well before Nicolson arrived in St. Petersburg to commence discussions, the Tsar on his own initiative received Dorjieff as an emissary of the exiled Dalai Lama ; he also sent him a telegram of support. Spring Rice related the embarrassment of the Russian Foreign Office at the 'Emperor's romantic interest in the spiritual chief of the Buddhist world ; but [which] is quite unable to control His Majesty'.[88] However, the British Charge d'Affaires dropped a hint to the Russians that such behaviour could conceivably jeopardise the prospect of a loan from London, A month later he was able to reassure Grey that the affair had no specifically anti-British overtones but merely involved the *amour propre* of the Tsar,

> deeply flattered by the supposed devotion of the Buddhist Church to himself personally and by their offer to acknowledge him as temporal protector. Since his journey to the East he has had some idea of the sort which has been sedulously nourished by Uchtomsky who accompanied him. The attitude of the Court officials during the Thibet War was significant as they regarded it as a personal insult to the Emperor himself. The Dalai Lama was his friend and supporter. He had suffered for his friendship to Russia and the Emperor regards it as his sacred duty to accord him protection. The story so often repeated by the Government that the Emperor is bound to

> do something to conciliate his Buddhist subjects is only partly true. The total number of Buddhist subjects of the Empire must be under 600,000 out of 128,000,000 and his sympathy for the Jews and the Mahomedans among his subjects (who are numbered by millions) is not very pronounced. The real reason is the idea which he had fixed in his mind that if he assumes or is given the right to act as temporal protector of the head and centre of the Buddhist faith he will become the moral chief of the continent of Asia. Of course the idea is chimerical but so was the idea of becoming the "Lord of the Pacific" of which he talked so much and which cost his Empire so dear.[89]

Such posturing did not however conceal the true aims of Russia's Tibetan policy from the perceptive eyes of Arthur Nicolson who, having reached St. Petersburg in early June, 1906 was observing, within a month of starting official conversations with Izvolsky, that Russia's desire

> to maintain intimate relations with the Dalai Lama, either present or future, or failing a Dalai Lama then with the Tashi Lama, is actuated by a wish to exercise, through that personage, some control or influence over the Mongolian nomads. Their concern for the spiritual welfare and the comforts of their Buriat subjects is, I imagine, in second place though they put it forward as their sole object.[90]

The age-old ploy of using the Tibetan Church as a political instrument in Central Asia had once again come into its own. At about the same time, Poklewsky from the Russian Embassy in London called on Hardinge at the Foreign Office for a discussion on Mongolia and Manchuria. The Permanent Under-Secretary observed that on the basis of past experience certain elements within Russia having seen their country thwarted in Manchuria were now keen to absorb Mongolia. His Russian visitor however assured him that his Government was interested in nothing more than the maintenance of the *status quo*.[91] The Russians were apparently alarmed at increasing Japanese interest there as evidenced in their encouragement of Peking's efforts to impose a centralised Chinese administration in lieu of the existing loosely knit structure. A few months later they returned to this theme. Izvolsky put out a feeler to Nicolson about including a clause on maintaining the *status quo* in Mongolia in

the Tibet Convention, suggesting as a bait that as the two countries were closely related, it would be in Britain's interest to agree. The British Ambassador, in a despatch to Grey, voiced his unhappiness over the matter since any such reference in the projected treaty would constitute an interference in China's internal affairs.[92] Hardinge, in an initialled comment, observed that 'Russia has ulterior motives in her interest in Mongolia and she desires the maintenance of the present feudal system in order that the Chinese administration may never be regenerated in those provinces'.[93] Grey echoed these sentiments, adding that as Britain supported the integrity of China, Peking must have a free hand within its frontiers.[94] India also objected.

In a final conversation with Poklewsky—for the Russians never raised the subject again—Hardinge summed up his Government's position as follows :

> ...it is quite impossible for us to restrict the action of China or any other Power in Mongolia although we can always restrict our own. Thibet is treated as part of the Chinese Empire, as Mongolia is also. I stated as my personal and private opinion that we could not go further than to say that in view of Russia's geographical position we recognise her special interest in the districts of Mongolia coterminous with the Russian frontier.[95]

The positions of Mongolia and Tibet were not constitutionally analogous, the former being listed as a province of China while the latter was deemed to have a special status. As this was a distinction in whose defence British diplomatists were later to fight tenaciously, Hardinge's lapse proved expensive.

The *quid pro quo* Russia offered because of her current weakness and also for its possible use as a bargaining counter with Japan was for Britain a lost opportunity. As Russia had already made significant inroads in parts of Mongolia in which she was specially interested, Whitehall's refusal to accept this arrangement did nothing to prevent the Tsar's Government from achieving its goals. With Japan conceding St. Petersburg its sphere of influence in Outer Mongolia in the secret Russo-Japanese Convention of 30 July, 1907,[96] the British had no further say on the

subject. Russia had won a free hand for herself, while Britain whose rights in Tibet were kept within the strict limits of the Lhasa and Peking Conventions appeared satisfied with a bargain guaranteeing that country's political sterilisation.

Haunted by the thought that she had little to offer by way of concessions in Persia, Afghanistan or Tibet—the three areas under discussion—Britain was prepared to strengthen the hands of Russians friendly to her, like Izvolsky,[97] and to ensure the existence of a regime committed to the smooth passage of Anglo-Russian relations, even if it meant modifying her traditionally hostile attitude on Russian demands in the Straits of Dardanelles.[98]

The basis for the prospective conversations outlined by Nicolson after his first formal meeting with Izvolsky included the following points: first, that Russia, like Britain, would accept China's suzerainty over Tibet, and engage not to interfere in the internal affairs of that country. Second, that Britain by reason of India's geographical proximity had a legitimate concern in seeing that Tibet's external relations remained undisturbed by a foreign power. Third, that Russia and Britain would agree not to send representatives to Lhasa. Fourth, that neither Russia nor Britain would seek special concessions regarding railways, roads, mines, etc. from the Tibetan authorities either for themselves or their subjects. Fifth, that both parties accepted that no Tibetan revenues in cash or in kind were to be pledged to themselves or their subjects.

These proposals were eventually incorporated into the final convention. What then were the issues that divided the two sides? There was, first of all, the question of visits to Lhasa by Russian Buriats – for spiritual purposes, it was said. However, in view of previous British experience the dividing line between spiritual and temporal motives remained dangerously thin. Nicolson remarked:

> Whatever paper guarantees we may obtain as to the limitations and nature of permissible communications between the Russians and the spiritual authorities in Tibet, they will afford little security against a continuation of close and

unofficial intercourse with the Dalai Lama personally. I do not know if it would be possible to exclude that personage permanently from Thibet, but I should have misgivings if he were to be installed again in Lhasa. I have little doubt that Dorjieff came on a mission from the Dalai Lama and though for the moment the communications between the Russian Government and him may refer principally to Mongolia and the spiritual needs of Russian Buriats, I doubt if they will continue to confine themselves to these subjects which may not be of direct interest to us. Whatever may be the goodwill and sincerity of M. Izvolsky himself in such a matter, he would not be able to control and check the activity of others.... To my mind it is important that we should have an acknowledgement on the part of Russia of our own special interests in Thibet, so that if we find those interests tampered with or jeopardised, we could take action accordingly.[99]

It was agreed eventually to reaffirm the right of Russian and British subjects to make the journey to Lhasa for strictly religious purposes. But, in order to remove the possibility of misunderstanding, each government undertook to ban all geographical and scientific missions to Tibet for a period of three years. Although not written into the main body of the Convention, this provision was spelt out in an exchange of notes attached to the Treaty. The Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa was also to be discouraged.

The British promised to evacuate the Chumbi Valley as soon as the third yearly instalment of the indemnity under the terms of the Lhasa Convention had been paid. One last point remained. Neither government was certain as to the exact geographical limits of Tibet—the Indo-Tibetan frontier was largely known but it was the Sino Tibetan boundary which gave rise to doubt. It was finally accepted at Russia's suggestion that for present purposes the Chinese view of Tibet's territorial alignment should be regarded as valid. As it turned out this particular problem was merely papered over, re-appearing some seven years later in the Simla Conference of 1914.

The Anglo-Russian Convention signed on 31 August, 1907,[100] was merely a palliative: it proved, as far as relations with Tibet were concerned, a halter round Britain's neck. The chorus of approval which greeted it underlined the prevailing sense of crisis. A notable exception was, however, Lord Curzon,

who while welcoming better relations between the two countries was critical of its terms on the ground that they involved surrender of British interests, nowhere better illustrated than in the Home Government's decision to give up the Chumbi Valley.[101] How sadly ironical must it have appeared when years later Morley wrote to him and confessed : 'It has crossed my mind many a time in these days that you were right and Grey and I were wrong about the Anglo-Russian Convention'.[102]

But for the present so keen was the Home Government to reach a settlement with Russia that the Foreign Office during the talks consulted only the India Office, the Prime Minister and Lord Ripon, almost totally ignoring the Indian authorities.[103] Hardinge noted, with a mixture of hope and expectation, that Russia from now on might concentrate her attentions on the Near East, and that this would bring her into conflict with Germany.[104] The uncertain politics of Berlin, of which he had great personal knowledge, was one reason why Valentine Chirol changed his hostility towards the Tsarist empire. But it was not the most important : 'It is the Indian situation which more than anything else made me anxious to see the Anglo-Russian agreement concluded .....',[105] a view shared by A. C. Lyall who writing to Nicolson said : '.....in the present state of India the importance of avoiding foreign complications on and beyond the Indian frontier is great'.[106]

The Anglo-Indian Press reacted to the Convention in tones of cautious welcome. The *Pioneer Mail*, for instance, observed that while treaties were rarely everlasting,

> the grand virtue of the present instrument lies in its comprehensiveness, and in the fact, that unlike its many predecessors, it seems to have been drawn up with an honest intention of closing all possible doors for future misunderstanding..... What we have to look to, however, is not the conditions of forty years ago but of four years ago. In this light by the acknowledgement of Russia's pre-eminence over a region where it was already an incontestable fact, we seemed to have gained security for India, independence for Afghanistan, and immunity for Tibet'.[107]

Of this "independence" the Afghan ruler was singularly unappre-

ciative, refusing to recognise a treaty to which he had not been party, while from his Darjeeling exile, three years later, the Dalai Lama must have pondered ruefully over the virtue of such "immunity". The leading organ of nationalist opinion, *The Bengalee*, whose editor was the distinguished Surendranath Banerjee, voiced its support of the accord as this could help curtail the Government's military expenditure and provide much needed relief to the Indian tax payer.[108]

Official circles in India, however, were less well disposed. Minto was hostile[109] and so was Kitchener. Morley was hurt by the Viceroy's attitude. 'I say this grieves me to the quick', he remarked, 'because all depends on the spirit in which (on both sides) the Convention is worked, and undoubtedly if the agents of the British Government approach the working of it with counsels of suspicion, anger, despair, the prospect is not cheerful'.[110] A year later Minto tried to mollify the Secretary of State. 'Please do not think', he remarked,

> I am shortsighted as to the value of Russian friendship at the present moment - and the German spectre is not at all unseen here. All the same "I have ma doots" as to the reliability of the friendship largely because I doubt the strength of the central power of control at St. Petersburg..... but one must look at the whole stage before one, and not be carried away by local emergencies. I quite see it, though I have never liked the price we are paying for Russian goodwill which is the obligation to be hand in glove with the most autocratic, cruel and corrupt of powers—neither can I think it can be acceptable to you![111]

This phillipic against the Russian autocracy might have carried more weight had the Viceroy not gone on to extol the virtues of friendship with Turkey—whose ruler's depravity and decadence put him beyond all others—on the plea that the Turks made the finest soldiers in the world, and their Caliph was venerated by millions of Muslims in India.

In order to ensure smooth progress for the St. Petersburg negotiations, Morley had insisted that the Home Government's policy should be observed in letter and spirit by Indian officials. He was thus irritated to learn of Bell's visit to the Panchen Lama, though made at the latter's request, in the winter of

1906.[112] And when the explorer, Sven Hedin, expressed a desire to visit Tibet (which he did in February 1907), he refused him permission to travel by way of India. The Indian Government was only permitted to forward his letters to Shigatse, and to allow him entry should he choose to leave Tibet by a South-westerly route. Now, with the Treaty signed, the Secretary of State saw to it that the ground rules of his Tibetan policy were applied with greater vigour. The Russians had 'a finger in the Tibetan pie',[113] and no amount of pleading by Minto about using the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley as a lever against the Chinese was able to shake the Secretary of State's resolve that the area had to be evacuated on time. He was less concerned than the Indian Government about whether a Chinese or Tibeten handed over the cheque for the final instalment of the indemnity.'.....it is humiliating', he remarked,

> to think how much of diplomacy is made up of points as this of ours. I know you will say, "yes, about the Chumbi, behind Punctillo lies Policy ; and the Chinese mean to play the first fiddle in Tibet, and this business about the payment in part of their tune". True enough, but I cannot for the life of me see what we gain in substance, permanent substance, by this long-drawn battle over a shadow. Prestige with the Tibetans ?" What was it ever worth, and was it worth a pin more than it was the day before. Curzon had a policy. So had the Cabinet that over-ruled him. Let us take care lest we fall between two stools, by trying to be in and out of Tibet.[114]

It was quite clear that O'Connor's day in Tibet was done. The British Trade Agent had few illusions about the real significance of the St. Petersburg understanding. 'As you will have seen from the Russian agreement', he remarked to his friend, F. M. Bailey, 'Tibet is a dead dog as far as we are concerned'.[115] His former adversary, Gow, who had been withdrawn from Gyantse as a concession to the British, had been honoured on his return to China. O'Connor had a less exciting reward. His removal by the Indian Government, early in 1908, was described by Morley as 'a moment of wicked joy',[116] and he was entrusted with the less onerous task of escorting the Maharajkumar of Sikkim on a world tour.

O'Connor, a great admirer of Lord Curzon, was one of a band of intrepid political officers whose initiative, daring and courage had been responsible for the success of many an imperial enterprise. Explorers, travellers, linguists, scholars, they had lived their lives among the peoples of the Indian frontier, studied their customs and habits, spoke their languages,[117] admired their qualities, were tied to them by bonds of affection. Born during the high noon of Empire they were schooled in the certainties of Victorian values. From the harsh discipline of public school they often passed straight into the autocracy of India where society worshipped at the twin altars of class and status. They experienced little or none of the travail of the popular politics that were slowly transforming the face of Britain.[118] O'Connor, Bell and Bailey were three men who served their country with distinction on the borders of Tibet. They were not the ordinary Indian bureaucrat whom Morley found so tiresome,[119] and who sometimes drove Curzon to distraction. However tenacious and subtle in diplomatic bargaining, none of their Chinese compeers could match them for breadth of mind and spirit.

While in England, O'Connor, having had dinner with Morley, wrote : 'I got for the first time some inkling of how our democratic Empire is governed'.[120] Nevertheless, he observed that the Secretary of State 'keeps the Indian Government completely in the dark about his plans and treats them as so many children'.[121] This estimate was no exaggeration, judging by the tone of one of Morley's letters to Minto written at about this time :

> In a poor country like India, Economy is as much an element of defence as guns and forts, and to concentrate on this and upon a host of outlying matters in Tibet, Persia, the Gulf etc. which only secondarily and indirectly concern you .... seems to me to be a highly injurious dispersion from the other and more important work of an Indian Government. Then again, notwithstanding all you say about the Man on the Spot, I humbly reply that this is just what the Government of India is not. China, Persia, Turkey, Russia, France, Germany—I have never been able to understand, and never shall understand, what advantages the Government of India

> has for comprehending the place of those factors in the great game of Empires. On the contrary the Government of India is by no means the Man on the Spot. That I say again, is just what the Government of India is not.[122]

This, in a way, symbolised the true crisis of Empire : a minister of the Crown in charge of Indian affairs, and a responsible Indian official locked in mutual incomprehension. At such moments, Britain's possessions seemed large and unwieldy.

Meanwhile the Chinese, under Article 3 of the Lhasa Convention, proposed trade talks between themselves and Britain in order that the 1893 Regulations could be revised and, where necessary, suitably amended. However, the provision calling for such a meeting included only the "Tibetan Government" and British representatives. The Peking Convention added to the confusion by according China *de facto* overlordship in Tibet but leaving her *de jure* status vague. The Chinese were, quite clearly, out to consolidate their gains. Hence the forthcoming negotiations turned out to be as much about politics as trade. But even before they got under way, John Jordan, Satow's successor at Peking, made a strong plea to the Foreign Office to try and disentangle the contradictions and ambiguities of its Tibetan policy. 'It would be advisable', he remarked,

> to take advantage of the present negotiations to define more precisely than is done in the existing Conventions the questions in which we claim the right of direct correspondence with Tibet and the extent to which we are prepared to accept the Amban as the intermediary between the Indian and Tibetan Governments. The very term "Tibetan Government" requires to be defined. In the Chinese text of the 1904 Convention it appears only as "Tibet" and outside of that instrument no Government in that country other than that of China is in reality recognised by the Chinese. My short experience of the working of the existing Conventions convinces me that there will always be great difficulty in getting China to recognise the existence of Tibet as a separate political entity and that the tendency will be more and more to construe the Adhesion Agreement of 1906 as returning to China her full suzerain powers. The present position is somewhat anomalous. One day we treat some Tibetan question, scientific missions for example, with China exclusively without any referenence to Tibet, and the next time we

> insist that, so far as the 1904 Convention is concerned, the co-operation of Tibet is essential to give Chinese action due validity. It is very much as if the United States had made, say, a Fishery Convention independently with Newfoundland and insisted that while Great Britain was at liberty to regulate the other foreign relations of the Island as she pleased, she must be associated with the Colonial Authorities in seeing that the terms of the particular Convention were duly fulfilled.[123]

The Chinese delegation which arrived in India in August 1907 was headed by Chang Yin-t'ang, and included the Tsarong Shape of Tibet, Wang Chuk Gyalpo ; but even the exchange of credentials and other courtesies that normally precede such a conference generated considerable friction.

Much to Chang's chagrin, Minto received the Chinese members of the delegation together but granted a separate audience to the Tsarong Shape. The Viceroy's gesture was, if anything, clumsy and discourteous. Minto and his wife, who had taken great pride in setting one major community in British India at the throats of another, were loath to eschew practices at which they were adept. In more appropriate fashion, Dane. the Indian Foreign Secretary, fought hard at the negotiating table for the insertion of a statement in the preamble which while accepting Chang Yin—t'ang's appointment by the Emperor of China pointed out that the Tsarong Shape's status was conferred upon him by the Tibetan High Authorities. The Chinese Imperial Commissioner contested this vigorously, claiming that the Tibetan owed his authority to Peking and that these negotiations were really between Britain and China. He asserted that the Peking Convention had rendered autonomous rights such as were granted to Tibet under the Lhasa Convention null and void.[124] Nor was this the only contentious issue, for Chang, with all the solemn absurdity associated with the mandarins of his time, asked to be received with the same ceremony as the Viceroy. The request being refused the Chinese envoy fell victim to a bout of diplomatic illness,[125] thus keeping faith with one of the stage rules of Chinese statecraft.

The negotiations proceeded slowly, with the Indian Govern-

ment making more concessions than they might have done had Morley granted them use of the Chumbi Valley as a lever. The Trade Regulations were finally signed in Calcutta on 20 April 1908 by E. C. Wilton on behalf of Britain and Chang Yin-tang and Wang Chuk Gyalpo respectively. The Government of India gained a point in the preamble which acknowledged that Chang Tin-t'ang was an appointee of the Emperor of China and stated that the 'High Authorities of Tibet have named as their Representative to act under the direction of Chang Tachen and take part in the negotiations the Tsarong Shape, Wang Chuk Gyalpo'.[126] This however, was counterbalanced by Clause 13 describing Chang and Wilton as plenipotentiaries, and Lhasa's representative, a "Tibetan Delegate".[127] There was some ambiguity about Clause 12 under which China undertook to police the trade marts effectively, while in rerturn Britain agreed to withdraw her guards and send no further troops to those areas. It then followed that 'The Chinese Authorities will not prevent the British Trade Agent from holding personal intercourse and correspondence with Tibetan officers and people'.[128] A year later Peking was to justify its military intervention in Tibet on the plea that it was exercising its policing powers.

Chinese gains appeared more impressive by virtue of a vigorous policy on the ground. The evacuation of the Chumbi Valley in early February 1908, while the Calcutta talks were still in progress, may have lent weight to the Chinese achievement in the eyes of the Tibetans and the peoples of the Himalayan borderlands. But of Peking's real intentions there could be little doubt. It was, in a word, determined to bind Tibet to the Chinese Empire.

The economic consequences of the Regulations which maintained the *status quo* in Anglo-Tibetan relations in matters of trade and commerce worked to China's advantage. The question of fixing tariffs on ordinary articles—one of the unresolved problems from the past—was no nearer a solution, and until such time as an agreement was reached the Lhasa authorities insisted on levying traditional dues, much to the annoyance, of the

British. The economic, social and political significance of the tea trade placed this commodity in a special category. Not surprisingly the Chinese were reluctant to forego the use of so valuable an instrument and, as such, the efforts of Indian tea interests to promote the sale of their product in Tibet were foiled. The Indian Tea Cess Committee had in a piteous appeal drawn the Government's attention to the commercial and political obstacles that barred them from establishing profitable business relations with the Tibetans. With the trade negotiations under way, they hoped 'such arrangements should be made as will enable Indian producers to compete for the market with Chinese growers'.[129] If these demands were not pressed sufficiently hard it was not for want of any effort on the Government of India's part ; it was because the Secretary of State remained adamant that Britain's involvement north of the Himalayas should be reduced to a bare minimum, and no amount of pleading by the Viceroy or his advisers was going to make him change his mind.

As the Chinese began strengthening their position in Tibet in the period following the Peking Convention they set about instituting a series of probes along the southern reaches of the Himalayas. These new activities commenced early in 1907 when Chang Yin-t'ang informed Nepal that he intended paying a visit to Katmandu. According to some rumours he was going to request the Nepalese for a loan to carry out administrative reforms in Tibet, and would seek the aid of the Gurkhas in training a Tibetan army ; stories were also afloat that he would rebuke the Durbar for the help it had given the Younghusband Mission.[130] Knowing of Nepalese plans to send a tribute-bearing embassy to Peking, Chang may have felt that the moment was opportune to emphasise Nepal's status as a Chinese tributary. As it was, Chang's visit never took place and the Nepalese Mission which was received by the Empress Dowager in May 1908 proved to be the last of its kind. There was indeed never any sign that the Nepalese would welcome Chinese influence either in their own country or within Tibet. They had developed over the years considerable

commercial interests in Tibet in defence of which they had gone to war in 1854-56. Therefore their merchants, who enjoyed special rights in that country, were never very popular there, and periodic anti-Nepalese riots put relations between the two countries under considerable strain.

Any fundamental change in Tibet that could jeopardise Nepal's interests was unwelcome to her rulers. In the years preceding the Younghusband Mission, Nepal had threatened to move against Lhasa in the event of Russian influence becoming permanent. Now, Chandra Shamsher was telling Manner Smith, the British Resident, in April 1907, that if the Chinese retaliated against a possible Nepalese refusal to allow Chang Yin-t'ang to visit their country by cutting off Nepal's trade links with Tibet, or close down her mission at Lhasa, his country would be prepared to use force. And since he expected British support, his threat presented them with an awkward dilemma. For if Britain had to eschew conflict in Tibet in the interests of her international undertakings, the continued security of her rule in India depended largely on the loyalty of her Gurkha soldiers. Writing to Morley, Lord Roberts observed that

> should any serious trouble arise in India in the near future, Nepal might play as useful a part as it played in 1857 on the Ridge at Delhi and in other ways...for what has been, and is still, going on in India, makes it clearer than ever that we are not there with the will of the people, and nothing that we can do for them will ever make them wish us to remain.[181]

Hirtzel observed that from the Indian point of view, Nepal had become the crux of the Tibetan problem for two basic reasons :

> the Gurkhas formed the best fighting material of the Indian Army : we can afford neither to lose them ourselves nor to risk their passing over to anyone else. Again the ruling caste is Hindu and a hostile and powerful Hindu state on the border will be a great source of danger in the event of serious dissatisfaction in the interior. It has therefore been generally assumed as an axiom that we cannot allow Nepal to pass out of the Indian sphere of influence into that of any other power.[182]

If his document[183] on the history of Sino-Nepalese relations

betrayed any anxiety it was because of Nepal's special importance to British India in those troubled times, and not for any fear that China's claims over that country were genuiue.

As Peking's intentions started to crystallise, Nepal emerged as one among a number of pieces on the Chinese chequer board. In a conversation with the Nepalese Representative at Lhasa, Chang observed : 'China, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim might be compared to the five colours, viz, yellow, red, blue, black and green. A skilful painter may so arrange the colours as to produce a number of beautiful designs or effects'.[134] The Amban started a newspaper in which his government's views were given a thorough airing and of these Bailey, from Gyantse, kept his superiors in India well posted.

The groundwork for the eventual British response to these Chinese thrusts was mainly achieved by the tireless efforts of three frontier officers. The first, A.W. Paul, in the concluding years of the 19th century succeeded in drawing the Bhutanese out of their aloof hostility ; and the Tongsa Penlop's aid to Younghusband was a tribute to his work and that of his successor, J. C. White. The Government of India also made their own contribution by allowing the Bhutanese to keep a tract of some 70 to 80 square miles of territory north-east of Kalimpong, which due to a surveyor's mistake, had been included in Bhutan.[135] Having realised that the new regime at Whitehall was jettisoning Curzon's Tibetan policy, White directed his efforts to strengthening Anglo-Bhutanese relations as a second line of defence. He visited that country in May 1906, and again in April 1907, on the occasion of the Tongsa Penlop's coronation as Maharaja. The Political Officer recommended a new Anglo-Bhutan treaty to replace the existing Sinchula agreement of 1865, suggesting in particular, a fresh clause which would enable the British Government to arbitrate in disputes between Bhutan and her neighbours and whose final decision had to be accepted as binding.[136] Previously this right to arbitrate only included disputes involving the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar. Later, in December 1907, White led another mission whose aims and expectations were best summed up by the *Pioneer Mail* :

> .... it is not to be supposed that because there has been no flourish of trumpets, Simla attaches no importance to the despatch of this embassy. It is a friendly mission, a mission of congratulation, a mission to pay the respects of the Government of India to the newly elected Maharaja of Bhutan.... The Indian Government could no more contemplate with equanimity the setting up of a hostile power over its borders in Bhutan that it could, say, in Nepal. Friendly dynasties in both must be the object of our desires.... The time has arrived for commenting our friendship with Bhutan and for adding the corner stone to the arch begun by the Mission of 1905.[137]

The visit, however, failed to fulfil its promise, thanks to Morley's wariness. By the time Bell succeeded White as Political Officer in April 1908, the Chinese had begun to unfurl their colours. Like his predecessor, Bell advocated the controlled development of Bhutan's natural resources with British and Indian help, and suggested that the new Maharaja, Ugyen Wangchuk, should be asked to place the conduct of his country's external relations in British hands in exchange for which he would be guaranteed complete internal autonomy and given an increased annual subsidy. The one loophole that might conceivably have permitted Chinese penetration would thus be effectively closed. For whereas White's proposal allowed British arbitration only in disputes between the Bhutanese and their immediate neighbours—there remained a possibility, however remote, that Chinese agents could be invited to enter the country by the Maharaja independently of any undertaking given to Britain—Bell's suggested agreement met both the needs of the current situation and the possible demands arising from a future contingency. Wilton who was in India advising the Government in the negotiations with China over the Trade Regulations agreed. Such thinking did not conflict with the reality that Bhutan as a state was fully independent of Tibet and China ; that whatever the ties that bound its rulers—as in the case of their Sikkimese cousins—with the hierarchs of Lhasa, these were religious and cultural and implied no political subordination. Likewise, although the Chinese Emperor was venerated, there was never any hint that Peking's political

supremacy had been accepted. Alastair Lamb, however, hints otherwise, stating that as a result of China's attempted mediation in a civil conflict in Bhutan in 1885 the Amban 'managed to acquire through the crisis some measure of control over the appointment of the Deb Raja and the Penlops'.[138] As proof he quotes from a contemporary Memorial to the Throne. These Chinese Memorials had often more to do with 'face' and the requirements of etiquette by which a mandarin in the 18th and 19th centuries was expected to hold back unwelcome news from the Son of Heaven. For instance, the Emperor Chien Lung only moved against the Gurkhas in 1792, after they had twice invaded the Panchen Lama's domain in successive years, as the Amban at Lhasa had kept him in the dark about the earlier aggression.

Thus the events referred to by Lamb are described differently by Bell. 'In 1885', he remarked dismissively, 'the Ambans at Lhassa demanded of the two leading Chiefs in Bhutan, the Penlops of the Tong-sa and Pa-ro districts, that they should restore a Bhutanese chief, whom the Penlops had expelled, but the demand was disregarded and abandoned'.[139] It is true that the present Maharaja had once been presented with an insignia of rank, comprising of peacock feathers, by the Chinese but these had faded from disuse. Moreover, no sooner had the Amban addressed him in early 1908 than he promptly informed the British. Chinese tutelage, it is clear, held no attractions for him.

Fortified by expert advice, Minto penned his despatch of 1 October 1908 to the Secretary of State recommending an urgent review of British policy towards Bhutan which

> is co-terminous with British territory for about 240 miles. It rolls down to the south in low hills and shades away over a mere geographical line to the Dooars which are occupied by tea-planters and other British capitalists. Moreover it is fast becoming a Nepalese State. Already three-quarters of the population of Sikkim are Nepalese, and the Gurkhas, who are multiplying fast are streaming over into the vacant spaces of Bhutan. For obvious reasons it is of real importance to keep the Gurkhas States under our control.[140]

This last observation underlined the imperial necessity of

balancing social and ethnic groups in as polyglot an empire as India. Furthermore, it indicated that however effusive were the British expressions of regard for Nepal there was always an undercurrent of suspicion concerning the political ambitions of its rulers. But it was eight months before Morley was moved to approach the Foreign Office. His departmental note pointed out that

> The question involves not only the direct result of the establishment of the Chinese authority in Bhutan, on the immediate adjoining districts, and on our position in Sikkim, but the wider issue of the effect that would be produced thereby upon Nepal.[141]

Writing to Grey from Peking, Jordan advised 'that a Treaty of the kind contemplated is necessary to checkmate Chinese pretensions'.[142] Finally, on 8 January 1910, the document was signed in Punakha placing Bhutan's external relations in British hands, but otherwise guaranteeing complete internal autonomy to the Bhutanese Government. Britain also increased her annual subsidy of Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 100,000 to the Maharaja. The signatories were C. A. Bell and Ugyen Wanchuk.[143]

Reluctant at first to heed the promptings of India, the Secretary of State's hand was eventually forced by the growing evidence of a Chinese forward policy whose political tremors were being felt in the Himalayan States. Lamb believes that China's manoeuvres were

> probably little more than *ballons d'ssai* intended to test the reactions of the British and the rulers of the Himalayan States··· in the ability to create such pressure the Chinese had acquired a bargaining card of some power, In the second place, the rulers of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan had probably not been quite so adamant in the face of Chinese diplomacy as they tried to make the Government of India believe.[144]

To take this last point first. There is no evidence—indeed Lamb has suggested none—to show that the rulers of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan were coquetting with the Chinese or exhibited in any way the slightest preference for them. Their material interests for one thing militated against such an attitude and veneration for the far-off Emperor at Peking was

a mere ritual. Lamb's other observation is too ingenuous. Certainly, little objection can be made against a political move or gesture intended to test a neighbour's intentions, for this is part of the accepted cut and thrust of diplomacy. If, however, such action should turn out to be a prelude to a military campaign or is co-ordinated with it, the matter surely assumes a more ominous dimension.

Chinese thinking as evidenced in the conversation between Chang Yin-tang's secretary, Liu, and Wilton hardly inspires a sanguine view of their intentions. Tibet, declared Liu, had belonged to China for centuries, and was as much a part of the Chinese Empire as India was of the British.

Chang's secretary went on to remark that hitherto it had been his country's policy to seal up Tibet, but it was now her intention to build it up as a bulwark for Szechuan. In reply to Wilton's

> assurances that the British Government only wanted trade facilities in Thibet, and that Great Britain at any rate, had no more idea of invading China through Thibet than China had of invading India through Thibet, Mr. Liu laughed and said that preposterous as the latter half might seem, there were people in China who nursed it...Mr. Liu told me that he heard alarming accounts of the unrest in India but admitted that he had not seen the slightest signs of disturbance.…[145]

However, in the complicated tapestry of international politics, it is only natural to suppose that there were other factors affecting China's calculations. The respite the Chinese were able to win from Russia, thanks to the latter's conflict with Japan, was over. The three Great Powers, Russia, Britain and Japan were burying past rivalries in the interests of a common accord. And in the light of previous experiences, the Chinese believed that such an understanding could only be sanctified at their expense. Russia was resuming her pressure in Mongolia and the Anglo-Russian Convention thus aroused popular suspicion within China.[146] Hence her most appropriate response was surely to prevent the consolidation of any potentially hostile combination. Before which of her principal adversaries, Russia or Britain, (Japan was to *fill this* role later) should she dangle

the bait? As the former appeared more unquenchable, it was to the latter that China turned. Britain had accepted China's predominat position in Tibet and was evacuating the Chumbi Valley strictly on time. The moment was opportune, and to Minto's astonishment, Chang and Liu approached the Indian Government with a proposal for an 'offensive and defensive alliance between ourselves and China.'[147] Morley politely turned down the offer. Chinese reasoning emerged in clearer outline: Russia could be resisted with greater strength in Mongolia, while in Tibet, China would have *carte blanche* in adopting any measures she considered necessary for the consolidation of her authority. Such British privileges as remained in Tibet would be there by courtesy rather than legal right. The Chinese calculated, that with so much unrest in India, the British would find their offer attractive, if not irresistible. Their move though well timed reflected in its very conception an inability to perceive the currents which were bringing Britain and Russia together. It is this failure to comprehend foreign realities that has been the achilles heel of Chinese diplomacy.

Notwithstanding this failure, China went quietly ahead with preparations for a more assertive Tibetan policy. The Imperial Decree of March 1908[148] with its reminder that Tibet was a rampart for Szechuan, and its call for fundamental reforms from Lhasa was a portent of things to come. Chang Yin-t'ang withdrew to Peking, where he took charge of the Tibetan department of the Wai-wu pu. He was essentially a diplomat, and his duel with the British had been a battle of wits. His successor, Chao Erh-feng, was principally a soldier, and one of the most remarkable Chinese of his time.

The significance of the new appointment was not lost on the British Ambassador. 'It is unusual', observed Jordan, 'to select an official of his standing and record for this position...Chao Erh-feng is expected to perform in Tibet functions similar to those of Marquis Ito in Corea, and especially to extend the control of the Chinese Government over the Tibetan Administration'.[149]

In September 1908 the Dalai Lama arrived in Peking from

his wanderings through Mongolia and north-west China, which had commenced with his flight from Lhasa four years before. Any hopes that he might have had of getting succour from Russia were finally extinguished by the Anglo-Russian Convention. A stay in the Chinese capital gave him an opportunity of exploring alternative courses of action. The Tibetan Pontiff was soon in touch with the representatives of the leading foreign embassies in Peking. Jordan was one of the first to be granted an audience, a sign that relations between the two nations were on the brink of a change. The Chinese, deeply suspicious about such contacts, did their best to discourage them.[150] There was little they could do to the Dalai Lama near Mongolia and its surrounds, from where he drew his spiritual following ; but once in Peking, they kept him under close watch, which the impressive ceremonial around him could scarcely disguise. 'There is a sort of tragic interest', remarked Lord Bryce after reading a report by W.W. Rockhill made available to him by President Theodore Roosevelt,

> in observing how the Chinese Government, like a huge anaconda, has enwrapped the unfortunate Dalai Lama in its coils, tightening them upon him till complete submission has been extorted...It deserves to be noticed in this case that not only has the Dalai Lama been thrust down to a lower position than his recent predecessors had occupied, by being obliged to send his Memorials to the Chinese Government through the Chinese Viceroy in Thibet, but that these are not permitted when they reach China to go direct to the Sovereign...The history of this whole transaction enforces once more the moral which seems the natural one to be drawn from the British expedition into Thibet. The chief result of that expedition has been to immensely strengthen the hold of China on Thibet, making it now almost a province of the Chinese Empire, and therewith to give British India upon the northern frontier instead of the feeble and half-barbarous Thibetans, a strong, watchful, and tenacious neighbour which may one day become a formidable military Power.'[151]

As if in echo of Curzon, Younghusband or O'Connor, Rockhill noted with regret that Britain did not press for the stationing of one of her Commercial Officers in Lhasa during

the recently concluded trade negotiations with China. A British presence would not only have been a restraining influence on Tibetans and Chinese alike, but could also 'assist in a peaceful change in the administration of the country'.[152] Nor was there any harm, according to him, in conceding to Russia a similar privilege if asked, since London and St. Petersburg were now allies. The Foreign Office, however, preferred to wait upon events, whose climax came with Chao Erh-feng's flying column thrusting at the gates of the Tibetan capital, and the Dalai Lama in flight on 25 February 1910, for the sanctuary of the Indian frontier.

The Government of India showed concern before the Chinese had reached Lhasa. In a lengthy, if at times incoherent telegram, Minto tried to arouse the Home authorities to the spectre of Chinese atrocities once Tibet was subjugated ; he emphasied the possible danger of Nepal taking independent action in order to safeguard her interests—a point underlined by enclosures from the Durbar at Katmandu to Calcutta. The Viceroy accused China of violating past treaties and undertakings and urged the necessity for close relations with the exiled Tibetan Pontiff,

> as in his absence, a monopoly of wool, hides and yak tails, against which strong remonstrances have been addressed to us by Cawnpore Woollen mills and Kalimpong merchants, were given by Lhasa to certain Thibetan merchants. Our political officer has also received an appeal in regard to this from the Bhutan Durbar.[153]

This last point, made during a serious a crisis devalued the tone of the Viceroy's warning. The Foreign Office remained sceptical.[154] But a mild note to China, calling her attention to the danger of unrest along India's frontiers and expressing the hope that she would do nothing to exacerbate matters, was recommended. The feeling in Whitehall was that as China in the past had been reproached for not exercising sufficient control over her Tibetan dependency a strong British move now would be wrong.

Morley, in his letters to Minto, particularly those written in March 1910 by which time the Dalai Lama, safely ensconced in Darjeeling, had met the Viceroy, reflected the prevailing scepticism at home. The Secretary of State, sensitive to the scent

of Curzonianism, warned against taking any precipitate steps that would lead to a repetition of the events of 1904; his message flavoured with a dressing of utilitarian tenets would, he hoped, commend itself to his colleague at Simla. 'Let me tell you', he remarked to Minto,

> how it strikes shrewd and expert people in the City. We have at least, they say, got our gold standard reserve back where it was before the American crash and famine in India. A year or two of normal rains will restore some finance and smooth water. But if we get drawn into a Tibetan expedition, chasing a lower import duty on tea, in favour of a trade that good judges say will never be worth two pence—or mix ourselves up in rows between China and Tibet, we shall squander a million or two that will throw us back, and be absolutely unproductive.[155]

In the months ahead, Morley never ceased to declaim against the slightest tendency to enlarge the scope of British commitments. His themes were unvarying: to make China take the place of the old Russian bogey would be a deplorable error of judgment; he would rather China and Tibet fight out their own battles; he poured scorn on all the idle chatter about 'Prestige'; he balked at any proposal to strengthen the military escorts at the British Trade Agencies since the Tibetans might draw the erroneous conclusion that Britain was about to take up cudgels on their behalf; and he was tired of the Dalai Lama, 'a pestilent animal, as he has proved himself to the Chinese in Peking, who should be left to stew in his own juice'.[156]

The British Charge d 'Affaires at Peking did little to ease the confusion within the Foreign Office. 'A policy which consists in subjugating outlying dependencies', observed Max Muller to Grey,

> before the Central Government is in a position to exercise proper control over the provinces of China may appear strange and contradictory from the western point of view, but in China we are in the land of contradictions, where the men dress as women and the women as men.
> It is highly probable that the Chinese Government have no clearly defined policy in Thibet... but there can be no doubt as to their general intention which is that Thibet shall become a

province of China, in fact if not in name thus aggravating the responsibilities of the Indian Government and emphasising the necessity for watchfulness on our frontier and in the three neighbouring frontier states.[157]

It may have been suitably patronising to ascribe the apparent irrationality of China's policy to the general quaintness of the Chinese people, but for all the blandness of his comments, Peking's moves were more finely calculated than the British Charge d'Affaires realised. For it was in China's outlying dependencies, sparsely populated and inhabited largely by non-Chinese subjects, where her authority was most vulnerable. It was here, therefore, that she faced the greatest need to assert her sovereign rights and have them recognised by the international community, even if the administrative control normally associated with such claims had to await a more favourable hour. In China proper the strong bond of national identity compensated for the weaknesses of the Central Government.

But complaisant though officialdom in London was about China's action in Tibet, they viewed the prospect of a lengthening Chinese shadow over the Himalayan border States with marked apprehension. Muller had informed the Wai-wu pu that Britain would not allow any changes that China might make in Tibet to interfere with the integrity of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.[158] In reply, the British were assured that China had no intention of interfering in Sikkim and Bhutan, though no reference to Nepal was made, an omission whose significance became clear with the notification of Chinese claims to suzerainty over that country. By now Jordan was no longer in a mood to hide his anxiety. In a private letter to Alston at the Foreign Office, he said that as the Chinese had been less than frank about their activities in Tibet, it was time for Britain to protect her own interests. 'A formal memorial in the Peking Gazette every 10 years has been hitherto the only evidence of their claim to suzerainty over Nepal, and this is, I think the first time they have notified us of such a claim'.[159] The British Ambassador suggested that India should immediately open negotiations with Nepal—before indeed China had

consolidated her power in Tibet—over an arrangement on the control of the latter's external relations. This was imperative as any Chinese assurances on the subject of non-interference in Nepal were of little value. Jordan's estimate of the promises received in Peking was not unduly harsh, when it is recalled in the light of recent events, that only two months before, Na T'ung, the President of the Wai-wu-pu, in an interview with Max Muller 'emphatically denied the report which had appeared in the press as to the Viceroy and Chao Erh-feng having proposed the conversion of Thibet into a Chinese province, rested on the slightest foundation.....as the step would constitute a violation of the stipulations of the Anglo-Chinese Treaty'.[160]

The problem facing Britain now was not so much to protect Nepal as much as to persuade her against launching an attack on Tibet in defence of her commercial privileges. The question had assumed a certain urgency since Chandra Shamsher had already enquired of the Government of India whether the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Russian Conventions pledging to uphold the territorial integrity of Tibet applied to his country ; and the India Office to whom his note was passed on had to admit that they did not. Confronted with this delicate situation, Morley fell in with Minto's proposal—which was to inform the Maharaja that in view of Britain's commitments to Russia and China, she expected to be consulted by the Durbar before it embarked on any armed action. He was strengthened in his view by fears in the Foreign Office that behind any display of force by Nepal the Russians might choose to detect the hidden hand of the Indian Government. As to Jordan's suggestion, the Secretary of State while recognising the advantages of a treaty with Nepal under which Britain would control her external relations, thought it prudent to await the initial overtures from Katmandu. Otherwise his natural caution made him keenly alive to the danger of a recalcitrant Nepal refusing one day to abide by such an agreement.[161]

As the possible threat of an explosion along India's northern frontier gradually receded so, too, did the danger of an attack

on British Trade Agencies in Tibet. Nevertheless, troops were assembled at Gnatong, in case the need for their services arose. But for this uneasy calm in the Himalayas, Britain shared no direct responsibility. She had accepted China'a right to do as she pleased in Tibet, but China on her part, had fewer scruples in questioning British authority in the Himalayan border kingdoms, and the belt of largely tribal territory east of Bhutan.

In October 1910 the Indian Government was informing London that China had addressed a communication, dated 8 August, 1910, to the Chiefs of Bhutan in terms that presupposed Chinese suzerainty, if not sovereignty over that country.[162] This was soon followed by rumours of an impending visit by a Chinese mission to the Nepalese and Bhutanese capitals. Max Muller therefore reminded the Wai-wu pu of the British note of 11 April 1910 which had informed China that no interference in the affairs of the Himalayan States would be tolerated. In reply the Chinese claimed that both Bhutan and Nepal were vassals of Peking but admitted that Sikkim was under British protection. Furthermore, they denied all knowledge of the Anglo-Bhutan Treaty and affirmed the right to regulate their relations with Bhutan's rulers according to established precedent.[163]

These claims, as the British Charge d'Affaires correctly pointed out, went beyond the previous Chinese note of 18 April, 1910. Its tone moreover was so aggressive and unconciliatory that he thought it best to forward it to the Foreign Secretary.[164] The India Office when consulted on the subject responded with remarkable coolness. They felt that the Wai-wu pu should be informed of Britain's acceptance of the 'present friendly and complimentary relations between Nepal and China',[165] but took a stronger line on Bhutan. Peking had to be informed that Bhutan had entered into a treaty with Britain of her own free-will, and as China had been made aware of its contents, there could be no further excuse for her to address the rulers of this small Himalayan country in the manner of a suzerain.

The absence of any undue alarm or apprehension at the Chinese claim over Nepal was hardly surprising as both Simla and Whitehall were by this time in receipt of Chandra Shamsher's

reassuring letter: 'I repudiate', remarked the Nepalese Prime Minister to the British Resident at Katmandu,

> with all the stress and emphasis at my command the Chinese claim of suzerainty. The claim is a damaging reflection on our national honour and independence, besides being an unwarranted fiction. We have always regarded the nature of our relations with China, although of long standing, as innocent, simple, and friendly. Nepalese missions to Peking, are of the nature of embassies from one court to another ···· the channel by means of which our high regard and respect for the Emperor was expressed, and the good-will of the Chinese Government, especially on account of our heavy stake in Thibet, is cultivated. The missions...can never be regarded as tributes. The Durbar agreed with me that a claim so derogatory to their status as a free people must be promptly disavowed.[166]

In his five years at the India Office Morley, in conjunction with Grey, had redefined Britain's Himalayan policy. Relations with Tibet were to be regulated within the prescribed limits of commercial privileges centred upon the three trade marts of Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok. British interest in local politics was to extend no further than the southern slopes of the Himalayas. But as the Chinese had made no reciprocal gesture this merely amounted to a self-denying ordinance. More than ever the situation demanded that India's line of defence be drawn up on sound geographic and strategical principles. Yet this is precisely what Morley failed to do. The Chumbi Valley, the most sensitive point on the whole north and north-eastern frontier of India, was handed over to the Chinese with apparent unconcern, and Indian officials who had the temerity to warn of the possible dangers of such a move earned either a lecture or scolding from the Secretary of State. One such person was W. F. O'Connor whose plea for the retention of this key valley has echoed prophetically down the years. 'It is', he observed,

> a wedge of foreign territory thrust down to the south of the Himalayas into the middle of States friendly or subject to us. North of the Himalayas there is a great barren upland stretching for 100 miles before any fertile spot is reached where any body of troops can be maintained. Without Chumbi,

> China would be unable to retain any but the most insignificant garrisons within 100 miles of our frontier. With Chumbi she can retain quite a considerable garrison within our natural boundary and can post officials there to worry us and to intrigue with the neighbouring States .... Chumbi, geographically and historically, should belong to us. It is necessary to us for strategical, commercial, and political reasons. The people are well disposed to us and would welcome our rule. If it were ours it would constitute a valuable security for the peace of that frontier. In the hands of a foreign (and possible hostile) Power it is always a thorn in our sides—a cause of friction in time of peace and a danger and embarrassment in time of war.[167]

These lines were written in March 1908. Two years later the Dalai Lama fled his country as columns of the Chinese army marched into Lhasa. It was an event which drew from the *Morning Post* in London this sombre reflection :

> ...a great Empire, the future military strength of which no man can foresee, has suddenly appeared on the North-East Frontier of India. The problem of the North-West Frontier thus bids fair to be duplicated in the long run, and a double pressure placed on the defensive resources of the Indian Empire. The men who advocated the retention of Lhasa have proved not so far wrong, whatever their reasons for giving the advice. The evacuation of the Chumbi Valley has certainly proved a blunder. The Strategic Line has been lost, and a heavy price may be exacted for the mistake. China, in a word, has come to the gates of India, and the fact has to be reckoned with.[168]

Notes to Chapter IV

1. The American Ambassador at London when making representations on behalf of his Government against British action in Tibet referred to that country 'as a part of the Chinese Dominions'. FO 17/1750, Lansdowne to Durand, 29 June, 1904.
2. Symptomatic of the concern to maintain the integrity of the Chinese Empire were the remarks by Balfour dismissing Roosevelt's fear of a Yellow Peril following Japan's Victory over Russia. 'The real danger', he warned, 'is not the remote and fantastic dream of a victory of East over West, but the very near and imminent peril of important

fragments of China being dominated by more warlike or aggressive Powers'. An Anglo-American Treaty designed to withstand such aggression would be the perfect solution, but he realised that the United States Constitution conspired to make such an arrangement difficult. Balfour Papers, 49729, Balfour to Spring-Rice, 17 January, 1905.

3. FO 17/1755, Satow to Lansdowne, 4 August, 1905. This view was expressed by Grand Councillor Na—T'ung in a conversation with the British Ambassador.
4. Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/11, Wilton to Satow, 30 September, 1904.
5. FO 535/4,Inclosure to No. 119, Ampthill to Brodrick, 29 September, 1904.
6. Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/121, Satow to Lansdowne, 5 October, 1904.
7. Ibid, Satow to Lansdowne, 17 November, 1904.
8. H. B. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Volume 3, London, 1918, pp. 443-444.
9. Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/121, Satow to Lansdowne, 5 October, 1904,
10. Ibid, 30 November, 1904.
11. FO 535/5, Inclosure 4 in No. 95, Memorandum of Conversation between Sir Ernest Satow and Price Ch'ing respecting Thibet, Satow to Lansdowne, 17 November, 1904.
12. Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/120, Satow to Lansdowne, 19 May, 1904.
13. FO 535/3, Inclosure 6 in No. 27, Satow to Curzon, 18 February, 1904.
14. L/PS/7/160, No. 160, Enclosure 2 in No. 17, Hosie to Satow, 9 October, 1903.
15. L/PS/7/173, No. 361, O'Connor to Fraser, 23 December, 1904.
16. This account of the Anglo-Chinese talks is based largely on the final report compiled by the Indian Foreign Department, which included draft proposals, letters and conversational records between the participants, and a

closing summary by S. M. Fraser. FO/371/176, No. 5282, 13 February, 1906.

17. FO 17/1755, Curzon to Brodrick, 10 July, 1905.
18. G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, London, 1894, p. 283.
19. Curzon Papers, F 111/345, Minute by Curzon, 13 May, 1905.
20. Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/11, Wilton to Satow, 24 May, 1905.
21. Ibid, 10 October, 1905.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid, 1 March, 1905.
24. Ibid, 24 May, 1905.
25. Ibid, 1 March, 1905.
26. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 5420 of 1910, Volume 68, Enclosure 3 in No. 8, Ti-Rimpoche to W. O'Connor, 4 January, 1905.
27. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 60, Bell to White, 17 November, 1905.
28. Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/11, Wilton to Satow, 10 October, 1905.
29. Ibid, 24 May, 1905.
30. FO 535/6, Enclosure in No. 9, Brodrick to Curzon, 20 January, 1905.
31. L/PS/7/176, No. 794, O'Connor to India, 15 March, 1905. See also L/PS/7/179, No. 1273, Report on the Gartok Expedition 1904-05 by Captain C. G. Rawling.
32. L/PS/10/148, No. 542, O'Connor to White, 25 June, 1905.
33. FO 535/7, Inclosure 6 in No. 51, White to O'Connor, 8 September, 1905.
34. L/PS/10/148, No. 542, India to White, 12 February, 1906.
35. L/PS/7/183, No. 1869, O'Connor to White, 25 November, 1905.
36. L/PS/10/148, No. 2602, Enclosure in Satow to Lansdowne, 30 November, 1905.
37. J. Morley, *Recollections*, volume 2, London, 1917, pp. 151-152.

38. Balfour Papers, 49729, Lansdowne to Balfour, 15 August, 1905.
39. Lovat Fraser, "Problems of Indian Administration", *Edinburgh Review*, Edinburgh, Volume 227, 1918, p. 175.
40. He did not include the United States in this evaluation. F. A. Hirtzel of the India Office made the following entry in his Diary on 22 January, 1908 : 'J. M. admitted that he had at the moment very pessimistic views about democracy. Bryce had told Grey that after a year's experience he was horrified at the corruption—legislative and other—in the U. S. A...He Morley described U. S. A. as an "unpromising Community", 864/3.
41. 'The more I read and think about British rule in India, the more stupendous and the more glorious it appears' Morley Papers, D 573/6, Morley to Hardinge, 11 April, 1911. Morley Papers, D 573/6, Morley to Hardinge, 11 April, 1911. For a critical view of Morley, see Younghusband's letter to Curzon 25 April, 1909. 'He [Morley] is crammed full of the stale culture of the mid-Victorian era—mediocre and middle class and as out of date as the Dodo". Curzon Papers, F 112/16.
42. J. Morley, *Recollections*, London, 1917, Volume 2, pp. 151-52.
43. J. Morley, *Recollections*, London, 1917, Volume 2, p. 152.
44. Morley Papers, D 573/6, Morley to Hardinge, 19 May, 1911.
45. H. Nicolson, Sir Arthur Nicolson, London, 1930, Introduction, pp. XIV-V. 'The German and Austrian Press made violent attacks against him as having been hostile to German and Austrian aims, both at Algeciras and in St. Petersburgh'. Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy*, London, 1947, p. 190. The occasion of this outburst was Nicolson's appointment as Permanent Under—Secretary of State at the Foreign Office in 1910 in succession to Hardinge.
46. Hardinge's appointment as Permanent Under-Secretary

was Edward VII and Lansdowne's insurance against any possible reversal of foreign policy by the Liberals. C. J. Lowe and M.L. Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power*, Volume I, London, 1972, p. 20. It was an appointment which confirmed the power of the anti-Germen element in the Foreign Office. Ibid. p. 19. G. W. Monger, *The End of Isolation*, London, 1963, pp. 264-265.

47. E. Grey, *Twenty five Years*, Volume I, London, 1925, p. 52.
48. 'We breath more freely about Germany at Algeciras and Morocco, but her temper remains extremely bad, and she is ready to make trouble in many quarters, from Macedonia to Baghdad or anywhere else. All these make a survey of the whole field necessary...a disposition to look at things from a wide and comprehensive point of view'. Morley Papers, D 573/1, Morley to Minto, 15 March, 1906.
49. Lascelles Papers, FO 800/12, Lansdowne to Lascelles 26 October, 1904.
50. L/PS/10/148. No. 2705, Foreign Office to India Office, 27 February, 1906.
51. Ibid. No. 2619, Foreign Office to India Office, 5 February, 1906. See FO 371/176, No. 5282, British Draft of 26 April, 1906.
52. *Aitchison's Treaties*, p. 28.
53. Ibid.
54. FO 371/176, No. 5282, S. M. Fraser to the Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India, 13 February, 1906.
55. FO 17/1754, Acting Consul, Litton, Teng yueh, to Lansdowne, 14 May, 1905.
56. Grey Papers, FO 800/44, Satow to Grey, 11 January, 1906.
57. Ibid, 11 May, 1906.
58. Morley Papers, D 573/1, Morley to Minto, 28 December, 1905.
59. Morley Papers, D 573/1, Morley to Minto, 9 February, 1906.

60. Ibid, 6 July, 1906.
61. Grey Papers, FO 800/44, Satow to Grey, 11 May, 1906.
62. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 5240 of 1910, Enclosure 4 in No. 131, White to India, 21 November, 1906.
63. Ibid, Annexure 2 in No. 135, Gow to Bailey, 4 December, 1906.
64. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 39, Ti-Rimpoche to O'Connor, 24 April, 1905.
65. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 150, Diary of Captain O'Connor, for the week ending 12 January, 1907.
66. Ibid, No. 141, Minto to Morley, 3 February, 1907.
67. Ibid, No. 143, India Office to Foreign Office, 6 February, 1907.
68. Ibid, No. 154, Morley to Minto, 12 March, 1907.
69. Ibid, No. 202, Jordan to Grey, 10 July, 1907.
70. Morley Papers, D 573/2, Morley to Minto, 2 May, 1907.
71. Ibid, D 573/1, Morley to Minto, 11 October, 1906.
72. Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/141, Lansdowne to Hardinge, 21 October, 1905.
73. Ibid. Lansdowne to Benckendorff, 4 September, 1905.
74. Ibid, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 30 August, 1905.
75. R. Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna*, London, 1965, p. 249.
76. G. Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, New Haven, U.S.A., 1961, p. 271.
77. Grey Papers, FO 800/72, Grey to Spring Rice, 19 February, 1906.
78. In a conversation with Dillon, the Daily Telegraph correspondent and a close friend, Count Witte observed that what Russia currently 'needed was not so much the support of a military power as that of a great liberal and commercial power. England's sympathy if afforded in some open and evident form would be of the very greatest service to the party of order.. He said that if England could see her way to such an open and evident sign of sympathy he himself could undertake to arrange

permanently for the settlement of all difficulties between the two countries in the form of a satisfactory treaty'. Grey Papers, FO 800/72, C. Spring Rice to Grey.
Spring Rice rightly concluded : 'But Witte wants it [agreement] because he wants money...'Grey Papers, FO 800/72, Spring Rice to Grey, 29 March, 1906. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, London, 1971, p. 438.

79. Beryl Williams 'Great Britain and Russia, 1905 to the 1907 Convention'. *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey* [Ed] F. H. Hinsley, Cambridge, 1977, p. 134.
80. Ibid, p. 147.
81. Ibid, p. 137.
82. Balfour Papers, 49698, Roberts to Balfour, 25 November, 1905.
83. Writing to Nicolson, Chirol reported alarming news from India : men and non-commissioned officers of certain regiments were believed to be attending political meetings in defiance of orders. Measures were being rushed through to redress native grievances in the army about pay. The political agitation was even spreading to the Madras Presidency which had hitherto been immune to seditious agitation. Hence : 'All this is an additional cause for hoping that our long drawn negotiations with Russia will be brought as soon as possible to a satisfactory conclusion'. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/339, Chirol to Nicolson, 5 June, 1907.
84. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/337, Nicolson to Hardinge, 6 October, 1906.
85. Ibid, 22 September, 1909.
86. Ibid, FO 800/338, Grey to Nicolson, 14 June, 1906.
87. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/337, Nicolson to Hardinge, 21 June, 1906.
88. Grey Papers, FO 800/72, Spring Rice to Grey, 10 April, 1906.
89. Ibid, 2 May, 1906.

90. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/37, Nicolson to Grey, 5 July, 1906.
91. FO 371/177, No. 24357, Minute by Hardinge, 10 July, 1906.
92. FO 371/382, No. 2244, Nicolson to Grey, 6 January, 1907.
93. Ibid, Comment by Hardinge.
94. Ibid, Comment by Grey.
95. FO 371/382, No. 4142, Comment by Hardinge.
96. A. K. Wu, *China and the Soviet Union*, London, 1950, pp. 39-40. This was followed by a second secret Convention on 4 July, 1910 which specifically recognised Japan's special interest in Inner Mongolia and Southern Manchuria. See Hosoya Chichero, "Japan's Policies Toward Russia", *Japan's Foreign Policy 1868-1941 : A Research Guide* (Ed. J. W. Morley), New York, 1974.
97. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/337, Nicolson to Grey, 7 November, 1906.
98. Grey Papers, FO 800/72, Grey to Nicolson, 16 November, 1906.
99. Grey Papers, FO 800/72, Nicolson to Grey, 21 November, 1906.
100. J. V. A. McMurray, *Treaties and Agreements eith and Concerning China 1894-1919*, New York, 1921, pp. 677-678.
101. *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 183, Cols. 1001-10023, Speech by Lord Curzon, 6 February 1908.
102. Curzon Papers, F112/213(b), Morley to Curzon 10 September, 1919.
103. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/339, Hardinge to Nicolson, 10 July, 1907.
104. Ibid, FO 800/340, Hardinge to Nicolson, 25 November, 1907.
105. Ibid, Chirol to Nicolson, 27 October, 1907.
106. Ibid, Lyall to Nicolson, 5 September, 1907.
107. *The Pioneer Mail*, Allahabad, 4 October, 1907, p. 9.
108. *The Bengalee*, 3 September, 1907, p. 5.
109. Morley Papers, D/573, Minto to Morley, 22 August, 1907.

110. Ibid, D/573/2, Morley to Minto, 19 September, 1907.
111. Minto Papers, 4E/365, Minto to Morley, 29 July, 1908.
112. Minto Papers, 4E/349, Morley to Minto, 7 December, 1906.
113. Morley Papers, D 573/3, Morley to Minto, 3 January, 1908.
114. Ibid, 24 January, 1908.
115. Bailey Papers, F 157, O'Connor to Bailey, 1 October, 1907. Younghusband, too, complained bitterly in a letter to Curzon : 'Tibet is of course hopeless. I really do not know how a Home Government can expect us again to serve them at all, for after all we have to go through immense risks to carry out a policy and then all we do is thrown aside. Mr. Morley thinks he is avoiding risks by closing Tibet. I say he is *running* risks. The way to avoid them was to keep up a gentle friendly touch. I had hoped that in giving up so much in Tibet they might have got something substantial in exchange elsewhere, but I have not yet seen any sign ot it'. Curzon Papers, F112/15, Younghusband to Curzon 20 April, 1908.
116. Morley Papers, D573/3, Morley to Minto, 19 February, 1908.
117. O'Connor spoke Tibetan, Nepali, Pushtu, Persian, Urdu, and read and wrote Russian.
W.F. O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond*, London, 1931.
118. Extolling the virtues of life on the frontier to any aspiring officer, O'Connor remarked : 'But he will find himself in the thick of real live politics—that is, history in the making, not "politics" as they are known in England, where the word connotes party intrigues, and personal struggles for office, and manouvres in the House of Commons'. W. F. O'Connor *On the Frontier and Beyond*, Preface p.VIII, London, 1931.
119. Morley Papers, D 573/2, Morley to Minto, 31 May, 1907.
120. W. F. O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond*, London, 1931.

121. Bailey Papers, F. 157, O'Connor to Bailey, 22 June, 1908.
122. Minto Papers, 4E 351, Morley to Minto, 3 January, 1908.
123. L/PS/10/148, No. 31724, Jordan to Grey, 7 August, 1907.
124. Minto Papers, 4E 351, Minto to Morley, 22 October, 1907.
125. L/PS/10/148, No. 1782, Dane to Ritche, 23 September, 1907.
126. Aitchison's *Treaties*, pp. 28-29.
127. Ibid, p. 33.
128. Ibid,
129. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. Paper 5240 of 1910, Volume 68, Enclosure in 208, Secretary, Indian Tea Cess Committee to India, 10 October, 1907.
130. FO 535/9, No. 116, Minto to Morley, 23 March, 1907.
131. Morley Papers, D573/3, Morley to Minto, 7 May, 1908.
132. L/PS/18/B191, Tibet by A. H. Hirtzel, 27 January, 1913.
133. L/PS/18/B176, Historical Note on relations between Nepal and China, by F. A. H. Hirtzel, 4 November, 1910.
134. L/PS/10/149, No. 654, Bailey to Bell, 11 February, 1909. See also C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 101.
135. FO 535/3, Enclosure 1 in No. 3, Bengal to India, 26 January, 1904.
136. L/PS/10/221, No. 981, White to India, 13 April, 1907.
137. *The Pioneer Mail*, 4 October, 1907, p. 9.
138. A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1960, p. 178. See also Lamb's *The McMahon Line*, London, 1966, Volume 1, p. 165.
139. C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, London, 1924, p. 99.
140. L/PS/10/221, No. 1921, Minto to Morley, 1 October, 1908.
141. Ibid, India Office to Foreign Office, 22 April, 1909.
142. Ibid, Jordan to Grey, 27 April, 1909.
143. Aitchison's *Treaties*, pp. 100-101.
144. A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, London, 1966, p. 168.
145. FO 535/10, Enclosure 1 in No. 104, Notes of a Conversation between Wilton and Liu on 23 and 28 September and 1 October, 1907.

146. FO 371/382, No. 34674, Jordan to Grey, 4 September, 1907.
147. Minto Papers, 4E 365, Minto to Morley, 6 February, 1907.
148. L/PS/10/221, No. 1921, Enclosure 7, Imperial Decree, 9 March 1908 of 174, Minto to Morley, 1 October, 1908.
149. Further Papers Relating to Tibet, Cd. 5420, No. 238, Jordan to Grey, 8 April, 1909.
150. FO 535/11, No. 114, Jordan to Grey, 12 October, 1908.
151. FO 535/12, No. 3, Bryce to Grey, 17 December, 1908.
152. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 3, Rockhill to Roosevelt, 8 November, 1908.
153. FO 371/853, No. 3543, Minto to Morley, 31 January, 1910.
154. Ibid, No. 5292, Max Muller to Grey, 15 February, 1910.
155. Morley Papers, D 573/5, Morley to Minto, 9 March, 1910.
156. Ibid, D 573/6, Morley to Minto, 30 June, 1910.
157. FO 535/13, No. 67, Max Muller to Grey, 22 April, 1910.
158. FO 535/13, Enclosure 1 in No. 67, Max Muller to Price Ch'ing, 10 April, 1910.
159. FO 371/154, No. 16007, Jordan to Alston, 11 May, 1910.
160. FO 535/13, No. 40, Max Muller to Grey, 6 March, 1910.
161. FO 371/854, No. 1678, India Office to Foreign Office, 11 May, 1910.
162. 535/13, Enclosure in No. 170, Minto to Morley, 4 October, 1910.
163. FO 535/13, Enclosure in No. 190, Wai-wu pu to Max Muller, 28 October, 1910.
164. Ibid, No. 190, Max Muller to Grey, 3 November, 1910.
165. Ibid. No, 193, India Office to Foreign Office, 14 December, 1910.
166. Ibid, Enclosure 1 in No. 193, Hardinge to Crewe, 6 December, 1910.
167. FO 535/11, Enclosure 1 in No. 101, Note by Major O'Connor regarding Thibet, 13 March, 1908.
168. L/PS/10/147, No. 341, Extract from the *Morning Post*, 28 February, 1910.

CHAPTER V

IN QUEST OF A POLICY : THE SIMLA CONFERENCE AND McMAHON LINE

Even as the crisis in the Himalayas continued to simmer, Minto's term of office expired. The question of his successor was one to which the Home Government had given much thought. Kitchener had aired his desire to don the viceregal regalia, and both the King and the Prime Minister, Asquith, looked on him with favour.[1] The final decision which, however, rested with Morley went against him. The Secretary of State was, for a start, uneasy at the prospect of a soldier heading an essentially civilian administration. But when the soldier in question happened to be Kitchener his doubts hardened into resolute opposition, for the Indian Commander-in-Chief had already given Morley a foretaste of the methods by which he had once reduced Curzon. Unknown to his colleagues in India, or at Whitehall, he had sought to whip up opposition to the Anglo-Russian Convention, on which the Cabinet set great store, with the help of the military correspondent of *The Times* in London.[2] Only this time there was no Tory cabal to lend weight to his efforts. When Morley got wind of the intrigue, he gave vent to his feelings in no uncertain terms. 'Now I have always had almost a superstitious faith in the loyalty of every soldier to his salt,' he remarked to Minto,'... but I am amazed and dismayed at this sort of perfidy.'[3]

The choice finally fell on Charles Hardinge, the Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office. A grandson of a former Governor General in India and a protege of Edward VII, his rise to prominence made him one of the principal advocates of closer British relations with France and Russia. Having shared in the anxieties and preoccupations of two

successive governments, he was intimately aware of their major concerns. Able, rather than brilliant—in Morley's words, he 'was not a first class mind'[4]—it was perhaps felt that as Viceroy, Hardinge could be trusted to keep India on a safe and steady course, with its internal administration maintained in good working order, but more importantly, its external policies functioning within the carefully prescribed limits drawn up by the Home Government. This meant, among other things, that the Indian Foreign Department whose time-honoured distrust of the Tsarist Empire had presented problems in the past, had to abstain from any action which could conceivably impair the existing relationship between Great Britain and Russia.

The new Viceroy's first public speech with its friendly reference to Russia was read in St. Petersburg as a statement of intent, and Sazanof, the Russian Foreign Minister promptly 'sent me a telegram expressing the thanks of the Russian Government...and promising to cooperate with me in a friendly settlement of any question arising to affect Anglo-Russian relations in India.'[5]

The most urgent question awaiting Hardinge's attention was the growing Chinese pressure along the Himalayas. Far from withdrawing its claims to Nepal and Bhutan, Peking now began to manifest an active interest in the belt of tribal territory farther east. The relatively easier gradient of its mountain walls ; the fact that it was largely inhabited by an assortment of primitive tribes about whose political allegiance the British were uncertain made this area the weakest link in the Himalayan chain. For similar reasons China felt equally vulnerable; the southern flank of Eastern Tibet seemed to be dangerously exposed, thus laying bare the approaches to her western province of Szechuan. Not surprisingly, the whole region became for a time a theatre of Anglo-Chinese rivalry, with each Power manoeuvering to gain control of the most strategic positions. The search for a strong, secure frontier along the Assam-Burma-Tibetan divide emerged, therefore, as a principal theme of Hardinge's Viceroyalty.

In this the Viceroy had to proceed with care lest the web of

alliances and interests on which so much British time and calculation had been expended should suffer serious damage. He had perforce to thread his way through a diplomatic minefield, and it would have been little short of a miracle had he succeeded in reaching his goal without setting off even a minor explosion. Hardinge's freedom of action was limited from yet another quarter ; for although Lord Crewe was now the new Secretary of State, Morley, still an influential member of the Cabinet, continued to keep a jealous watch on the activities of the Indian Government in the trans-Himalaya ; the merest sign that they were straying from the strict observance of the policy of non-interference laid down by him was instantly noted and opposed. Indeed, so large loomed the shadow of the former Secretary of State that, when the present incumbent had to retire for a while through illness, his predecessor returned to preside in his place.

While the primary focus of official attention in the 19th century may have rested on Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and other areas of the frontier farther west, the Assam Himalaya was not ignored. Assam had been absorbed by the British in 1826, and in keeping with the prevalent practice elsewhere on India's northern borders, they sought to revive a traditional, trans-frontier trade by opening a mart at Odalguri in the Darrang District, in 1833, to which it was hoped traders would come from Tibet and the hills to barter their wares. However, as the border with Tibet was undemarcated, there was occasional friction between officials of the Assam Government and those of their northern neighbour and this put paid to any thriving commercial enterprise for the present. Undaunted, certain scribes and experts continued to give expression to their hopes of a day when the Brahmaputra as an artery of trade would carry British goods and services to the very heart of the Celestial Empire. Shortly after the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa, Sir Thomas Holdich wrote in a similar vein reviving, however fleetingly, the vision of an earlier age. 'It is a gradual rise from the plains of Assam (500 feet),' he remarked, to the highlands of Lhasa (11,500 feet), and in those good

> times when the last relics of savage barbarism shall give place to that interchange of commercial rights which is, after all, the best guarantee of international peace (a guarantee founded on mutual interest), it will be realised that this is the natural highway from India to Tibet and western China, and we shall have a Tibetan branch of the Assam Railway, and a spacious hotel for sightseers and sportsmen at the falls.[6]

But in order to realise this dream, a great deal remained to be done in the way of acquiring vital geographical and ethnographical knowledge of Upper Assam. It was an area of dense jungle, of great rivers like the Brahmaputra, whose precise course still remained to be charted, and of hostile tribes, a list of which from west to east was as follows : Akas, Daphlas, Apa Tarrangs, Miris, Abors, Mishmis, Khamtis and Singphos.[7]

In the second half of the 19th century punitive missions were periodically sent against the Abors, Mishmis and Daphlas for, 'true to their highland origin, they have endeavoured to live at the expense of their neighbours of the plains'.[8] The Monbas, however, were one ethnic group who were an exception to this rule. Kinsfolk, perhaps, of the inhabitants of Eastern Bhutan at some distant past, they were law abiding, timid and showed great skill as farmers. Their social customs resembled those of Tibet, except that polygamy and polyandry were not prevalent among them. Both in their language and religion, Tibetan influences were plainly evident; a fact easily understood as Tawang, where they lived, lay under Tibetan administrative control and its monastery of 500 monks had strong links with the parent body at Drepung, near Lhasa.

Tawang or Monyul (meaning in Tibetan the lower country) was an area of 2,000 square miles wedged between Bhutan on the west, the Miri and Aka hills to the east, Assam in the south, and by a rugged mountain range of 15,000 feet to the north, separating it from the Tibetan plateau. Although two subsidiary ranges subdivide Tawang into three broad phsical zones the country was, as a whole, easier to traverse than any other in the territory. It was also notable for the road that commenced at Odalguri, proceeded thence to Taklung Jong before passing through into Tibet; its total length from the foothills to Lhasa

being a mere 311 miles. The commercial possibilities were best summed up by O'Connor :

> Tawang is a mart of some importance as the distributing centre of goods from Lhasa and Eastern Tibet, from Bhutan, India and Assam, and from the fertile, though savage districts of South-Eastern Tibet ; and no doubt the commerce of this place will some day assume fairly large proportions. At present it is reached from Assam by execrable tracks which become impossible in the rains.[9]

Throughout the 19th and early years of the 20th centuries, however, the Indian frontier was held to run along the foothills, as it was the declared policy of the British authorities to leave the inhabitants of Upper Assam to their own devices. Indeed, so serious were they in this that in 1872 they took a hand in eontrolling the activities of rubber speculators whose operations not only interfered with the Government's revenue but also threatened to disturb relations with the hill tribes. But when in the following year the spread of tea gardens outside the fiscal limits of the British dominion led to further complications with the neighbouring hillmen, administrative measures were introduced to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The Government's Inner Line Regulation of 1873 was designed to prevent strangers from going to tracts where official control was inadequate and little or no help available. Special permission was required to pass the Inner Line which constituted the administrative boundary of British India. However, beyond this lay the Outer Line whose position along the foothills was regarded as the country's external frontier ; the territory in between covered by dense jungle and sparsely populated, being loosely administered by a political officer. Normally the Government discouraged political officers from making journeys beyond the Outer Line, but, in exceptional cases, permission was granted. One such instance was the freedom given to Francis Jack Needham, the first Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya, whose pioncering work earned him the following tribute in the Sadiya Frontier Tract Gazetteer of 1928 : 'By his explorations, and discoveries, Mr. Needham acquired an international reputation

and his work from 1882 to 1905 laid the foundations of the modern North-East frontier of Assam.'[10]

Noel Williamson, who succeeded Needham, also travelled with official blessing beyond the Outer Line towards Rima, situated in the South-Eastern corner of Tibet, in the winter of December 1907-January 1908, advocating on his return a series of measures whose immediate effect would be to attract Tibetan commerce to India. On a more ambitious note was his suggestion of a railway line to Rima, a feasible project as its height was only 500 feet ; he expressed the hope, too, that sufficient thought would be given to extending the track into the territory beyond. For, difficult though the second half of this plan might be, the rewards would be greater still because,

> were there facilities for quick communication between India and Western China the possibilities would appear to be boundless. Given a railway, every ton of our exports for Sechuan would be captured for this route instead of being carried by a long sea voyage from Calcutta, only then to commence the difficult journey up the Yangtse. With such improved communications, the resources of Sechuan, one of the wealthiest provinces of China, would develop enormously ; with an easy and expeditious route there is no reason why the Chinese Coolie could not seek for employment on the tea gardens of Assam, and so possibly solve some of the present labour difficulties.[11]

Three years and more later, in March 1911, Williamson met his death at the hands of Abor tribesmen whose territory he was visiting. It turned out subsequently that on this occasion he had crossed the Outer Line in violation of the Government's instructions ; his tragic end emphasising the sort of incident the authorities feared when they instituted their Frontier Regulations.

Commenting on the controversy in Parliament concerning Williamson's presence in those hills and the desirability of making such expeditions, a contemporary with considerable experience of that area, complained that people arguing along these lines

> do not know what is required of a frontier official and his life. He has to be in touch with all tribes in his sphere of

jurisdiction, to acquaint himself with all that is going on either side of the border, and to influence, if possible, the wild folk in the right direction. For obvious reasons Government lays down rules as to the crossing of borders, and in 1872-73 a regulation was drawn up prescribing a limit of direct administration which is known as the "Inner Line", namely, a boundary maintained at the discretion of the Lieutenant-Governor, which British subjects of certain classes are not allowed to cross without a pass. This "Inner Line" shown on maps is not the British frontier—it is merely a line fixed by Government to guide the civil officers as to the extent of their jurisdiction. No frontier officer could adequately fulfil his duties if he sat year in year out in his headquarters station, so to speak, merely listening to most likely unreliable reports brought in by so-called "friendlies" ! Would McCabe, Davis, Needham in Assam, and others in Burma have won such credit as border officials if they had not, when opportunity offered, accepted the responsibility for exceeding their routine instructions in order to get more in touch with wild people, whose customs and countries stimulated their keenest interest, and thereby gave Government a considerable amount of information obtainable in no other way.[12]

However, the inevitable despatch of a punitive mission gave the British an opportunity of initiating a bolder and more positive policy in the tribal belt, particularly as the Chinese were showing an interest in the area themselves.[13] Nevertheless, this new policy was only adopted after much agonizing. The realities on the ground may have demanded a change but Morley, with his ill-concealed contempt for the opinions of the men on the spot, from whose myopic vision, he believed, the loftier concerns of Whitehall were hidden, was loath to jettison his cherished views on non-interference.

As early as May 1910, during Minto's term of office, the Government of East Bengal and Assam had indicated the need for fresh thinking. Apparently, a Mishmi chief had approached Williamson while the latter was on tour, claiming that he was a British subject. Thus far, the Mishmis had been left well alone to administer themselves as they pleased, and under normal circumstances, a continuation of this traditional policy would have been wisest. The second alternative, to take them under British protection, would entail a number of difficulties,

the chief of which was that the Government's political boundary would greatly exceed its area of administration control. To remedy this, posts would have to be set up in sparsely populated mountainous tracts and their supply lines assured. On the other hand

> it is doubtful whether the Chinese would venture to disregard a definite pronouncement that we would not tolerate any advance beyond the western boundary of Tibet. The third alternative to allow the Chinese to extend their influence right down to the foot of the hills bordering on the valley of the Brahmaputra might be productive of serious administrative inconvenience. The question is one which must be decided on grounds of military expediency and high state policy.....[14]

Lord Minto had clearly been impressed by the seriousness of Chinese activity at Rima and in the vicinity of the tribal tracts as he hastened to address Morley on the question. The Viceroy suggested that the Outer Line be extended to include a part of Tawang, stretch as far east and as near Rima as possible, and continue through the watershed between the Irrawaddy and the Zayul Chu to the divide between the Salween and Irrawaddy. Meanwhile arrangements should be made to prevent the tribes from establishing relations with foreign powers. However, a great deal more knowledge concerning these tribes remained to be acquired before the guidelines of a suitable policy could be drawn up. But in the case of the Mishmis, whose territory lay adjacent to Rima and was thus most vulnerable to a Chinese thrust, urgent action was necessary. They should immediately be placed under British protection having of their own accord expressed a desire to be treated as British subjects.[15]

As expected, the Secretary of State dismissed Minto's pleas, holding that the question should be kept pending until Hardinge's arrival in India. He calculated, no doubt, that the new Viceroy untouched by the phobias of Indian administrators would give short shrift to any recommendations for a new forward policy.

Hardinge reacted predictably. At an interview with the Governor of Assam, Sir Lancelot Hare, in Calcutta on 22 November 1910 he was at pains to emphasise that

> any forward movement beyond the administrative frontier was strongly to be deprecated. Chinese aggression would, in Lord Hardinge's view, be met, not in the tribal territory bordering Assam, but by an attack on the coast of China. He was, therefore, opposed to running risks or spending money on endeavours to create a strategic frontier in advance of the administrative border, and he was unable to agree to any promise of support being held out to the Mishmis or other tribes beyond our frontier who might appeal for help against Chinese aggression. Frontier officers should, Lord Hardinge thought, confine themselves to cultivating friendly relations with the border tribes and punishing them for acts of hostility within our limits.[16]

The Viceroy was, however, prepared to support cautious explorations of the country beyond the Outer Line provided there was no risk of complications, but he firmly refused official sanction for any general increase of activity in that direction.

Notwithstanding these discouraging words, Hare held tenaciously to his views. He had the advantage of Hardinge in his experience and knowledge of the situation. The Viceroy's comment that possible Chinese aggression on India's North-Eastern frontier would be met by a British attack on China's coast was faintly ludicrous. It was as if he were seeking to retouch the fading canvas of the Opium Wars. While China may still have been weak, Hardinge appeared to have forgotten that the precarious international peace in Europe covered Asia as well, since the Great Powers who were committed to upholding it had binding interests in both continents.

Even so his reactions might have made sense where frontiers between states were neither far flung nor unknown, but were, for the most part, well demarcated ; where relatively advanced and organised forms of social life prevailed in almost every corner of a country's domain. Aggression in such a context inevitably meant open war. Not so in the north-eastern frontier of India. Developments there recalled the Great Game of an earlier period when the expanding empires of Russia and Britain pushed and probed at each other, when the frontier officer as explorer, soldier and surveyor was the indispensable knight to an opponent's pawn, when the threat of war loomed large one moment only to recede the next.

A few months after his encounter with the Viceroy, Lancelot Hare returned to his theme,

> that the Chinese should not be permitted to extend their influence up to the Outer Line. The position on this frontier could then be similar to that of the north-west frontier if we ceased to control the Khyber and Bolan Passes and retired to the plains, leaving the Afridis and other tribes in possession of all the hill country. Given possession of the hills, the Chinese will be in a position to dominate all the tea gardens north of the Brahmaputra and, at their present rate of peaceful penetration, it will not be long before they assert their influence over the hill tribes of our border.[17]

The letter was shrewdly timed. News of Noel Williamson's death at the hands of the Abors having reached India, the Assam Governor must have been aware that plans were afoot to send a punitive expedition. And as such an undertaking involved breaching the Outer Line, it was an opportune moment to initiate a review of official policy.

Hardinge thought so, too. Yet, earlier in the month in a private letter to Nicolson he had remarked :

> People in England and elsewhere talk and write a good deal of the danger we are in here of being enveloped by China on our North-East frontier. I assure you it is all moonshine. We have the good fortune to have on that side an almost impenetrable jungle for some hundreds of miles where there is neither food nor water, and where the risk of invasion by as many as 1,000 Chinese is nil. So long as we are on our present terms of friendship with Russia we have no external danger to fear.[18]

However, the disquieting evidence of increasing Chinese activity on the north-eastern frontier brought with it a dawning realisation of the true seriousness of the problem before him. He began by appealing to the Secretary of State for permission to despatch a punitive expedition to the Abor territory and, at the same time, to allow the Mishmi country to be systematically explored and surveyed so that a suitable frontier between India and China could be determined.[19] No trouble was anticipated from the Mishmis who, after all, had first approached Williamson with a request to be treated as British subjects. Although the Viceroy disavowed any intention of extending the present

administrative boundary the fact that he also proposed in future to despatch a small police force at periodic intervals to the area meant that he wished to draw a line of loose political control beyond it. Less than a year before a similar request from Minto had been turned down by Morley, a decision with which Hardinge had been in complete accord. The wheel of events had indeed turned full circle.

Crewe approved the punitive measures that the Government of India intended to take against the Abors. He also accepted the need to explore their country and that of the Mishmis. But in case of unprovoked aggression from the Chinese it would, he emphasised, involve definite British protection for the frontier tribes. It was a matter which he hoped Hardinge had fully considered, as he would be held responsible for any dire consequences that might follow.

When, in late September, Hardinge replied with a detailed explanation of India's case his views on the Chinese danger had hardened.[20] F. M. Bailey had by this time completed an astonishing journey from China through South-Eastern Tibet into Assam,[21] arriving finally in Simla where he was able to testify in person on China's attempts to establish her authority over the Mishmi Chiefs.[22] Circumstances, remarked the Viceroy, had forced his Government to revert to the policy of Lord Minto, and his main object now was to secure a sound strategic divide between China cum Tibet and India. As long as Tibet lay dormant an undefined frontier represented no danger. An entirely new situation had now arisen making the question one of compelling urgency. For within the government's administrative border considerable European capital had been sunk and more Europeans worked here than in any comparable district in India. Furthermore, the internal situation in Eastern Bengal and Assam was troubled enough already without the advent of an aggressive and intriguing neighbour. Not only did China continue to display unusual activity in the vicinity of the tribal tract, she showed no signs of withdrawing her claims to Nepal and Bhutan. Finally, in an attempt to allay the fears of the Secretary of State about needlessly extending the Government's

responsibilities, the Viceroy remarked that British protection would not automatically include the Abors and Mishmis in the event of a Chinese attack, but that all the same, these tribes would be left in no doubt that they were under British control and would therefore be expected to behave accordingly—which entailed a curiously unequal exchange : the exercise of rights without the discharge of corresponding obligations. Fortunately it proved to be no more than a loose end of policy which in time fell silently into place. But for the moment this was the continuing contradiction, for India while proposing to put up boundary cairns at points where tribal territory emerged distinct from Tibet, would give no undertaking to defend the country beyond its administrative border.

The Viceroy also showed his hand by appointing Henry McMahon Secretary to the Indian Foreign Department ; his immediate responsibility being to supervise arrangements for the Delhi Durbar in December 1911 at which India would pay homage to the newly crowned George V and his consort, Queen Mary. The ceremonies concluded, he would be expected to give his whole attention to the weightier problems of India's North-Eastern frontier.

Born in Simla, of a family with long and honourable connections in India, the new Foreign Secretary had acquired a lifetime's experience as Political Agent in the strategic areas of India's North-West. The successful demarcation of the Afghan-Baluchistan border was carried out under his skilful direction.[93] Now, in an hour of growing need, he was, once again, entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the search for a secure frontier. Hardinge's choice was made after much thought. Writing to Curzon he said :

> I sent for no less than five others to come and see me and to stay with me for a few days before I came to any decision. I had not the slightest doubt as to MacMahon's being far the cleverest and broadest-minded of the lot, and, curiously enough, there has not been a single protest from anybody although he is not a regular member of the Indian Civil Service. He is at the same time a very pleasant and agree-

able man and it will be a pleasure to me to have to deal with him personally.[24]

That McMahon's subsequent career in the Middle East during World War I is a subject of controversy does in no way detract from his record of service in India.

Crewe's misgivings about the Viceroy's declared aim of establishing an external frontier beyond the line of administrative control were shared by Grey. The Foreign Secretary expressed the opinion that to put up boundary cairns and then retire would merely complicate matters. He was also in favour of informing China of the formal limits of British territory only when such a claim was supported by evidence for its protection and defence. Therefore, suggested Grey, the various missions in the process of being despatched to the tribal tracts should confine their efforts to a careful investigation of the terrain and its inhabitants. Then, when their reports were ready, the Government, in the light of the available data, could take a decision concerning a suitable frontier and intimate China accordingly. A premature approach to Peking might otherwise provoke greater Chinese activity in the area.[25]

The Secretary of State drew up instructions to Hardinge on the lines of Grey's proposals, but allowing India to apply them flexibly. For instance, it was possible in view of Rima's proximity to the frontier, that measures might have to be taken to prevent Chinese aggression directly after the departure of Dundas, in which case the establishment of a police post commanding Menilkrai (a point where the Chinese had put up flags in August 1910 and were to do so again in January 1912) should be considered. The Mishmi mission under the charge of Dundas was the most important of the three to be despatched in the winter of 1911, simply because the territory to which it was assigned was the most vulnerable to a Chinese thrust. Its efforts were to be complemented by a second party led by Kerwood, whose task it was to survey and report on the Miri tract ; while the punitive expedition against the erring Abors was commanded by Major-General Bower, with Bentick as the Assistant Political Officer.

Ever since Alexander's day, the well worn trails of invaders had made the North-West frontier familiar to the peoples and rulers of Hindustan : the North-Eastern marches, in contrast, proved to be the Great Unknown, of which 'little has been written, and for many years this border has remained hazy in its geographical limits, peaceful in its policies and happy in the dullness of its annals.'[26] The chapter of developments about to commence would prise this region from its seclusion and integrate it into the dominions of the Raj. But the tremors accompanying this process affected not only Anglo-Chinese relations but had wider diplomatic ramifications as well. Principally it was Peking that was most concerned. China's military presence in Tibet coupled with her forward policy along the Himalayas had forced Britain to make these counter moves, thus reversing the roles of the two sides in the period immediately before and after the Younghusband Mission. With the Dalai Lama now an exile in Darjeeling, Tibet was reduced to a voiceless part of the Chinese Empire. In 1911, therefore, Anglo-Tibetan relations had all but ceased.

That year was also notable for another event. According to the notes exchanged between Russia and Britain in the Convention of August 1907, both parties had agreed to ban the entry of scientific missions to Tibet for a period of three years after which the matter would be discussed again. Due to the uncertain situation on the Assam stretch of the Indo-Tibetan frontier the British Government, at India's prompting, perhaps felt that the usefulness of this self-denying clause had ended. Otherwise the reconaissance missions entrusted with the task of exploring the terrain with a view to establishing a sound frontier would be unnecessarily impeded in their efforts. Moreover the delicate phase in Anglo-Russian relations was over ; their friendship, it was felt, had taken firm root. As such Russia showed little hesitation in accepting the British proposal to allow the agreement to lapse. Sir George Buchanan, who had succeeded Nicolson as British Ambassador when the latter returned to London to become Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, enclosed an extract from the *Novoe Vremya* of 13 January,

1911, to Grey, which voiced its approval in the following words :

> The paper welcomes this decision as a sign of confidence between the two Powers, and is showing that the old absurd fear of military and political missions masquerading under the guise of expeditions in the cause of science is now at an end. There is no doubt that if either country were now to send a scientific expedition to Thibet men of science and naturalists of the other country would be invited to join it··· The more Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations are simplified, the better it will be for both countries. With a reasonable give and take there is nothing to divide Russia and England, and each country has something to gain by combining forces.[27]

Rockhill, the noted Tibetan scholar, and now the United States Ambassador to the Tsarist Court, was eager to see the new spirit of friendship between Britain and Russia put to use in the form of a joint scientific expedition to Tibet. Apart from its scientific value, such a venture would put heart into the Tibetans in their resistance against Chinese domination. For there was little doubt in his mind that China had emerged as the biggest single threat in the Himalayas ; an opinion he forcefully expressed in a conversation with a member of Sir George Buchanan's staff. He 'wondered how we could watch with equanimity the manner in which the Chinese were over-running Tibet and trying to extend their influence over Nepal, Bhutan and other principalities on our frontiers.'[28]

If Rockhill's proposal[29] was rejected by both the Home Government and India, their reasons were not far to seek. In the eyes of their principal adviser on Tibetan affairs, C. A. Bell, the scheme, by bringing Russia into Tibet, would violate a sacrosanct principle of British policy and was, therefore, unacceptable.[30] Of the two, China was the lesser evil. Today, argued Bell, Anglo-Russian relations were amicable, but present circumstances could change ; if and when they did, it would not be in Britain's interest to have Russian influence at work in the Tibetan capital. Moreover, the British had already turned down the Dalai Lama's request for help against China ; should an Anglo-Russian mission now arrive at Lhasa it would only

redound to the credit of the Tsar. And as Russia's prestige increased so, too, would Britain's diminish. Lastly, he was afraid that the nearness of a Russian presence could have an unsettling effect elsewhere in the Himalayas. In Bhutan, for instance, Russia was the vaguest of names and it was in Britain's interest to keep things as they were. Bell's despatch, notable for its hidebound conservatism, conveys a picture of a period-piece Indian official at his least endearing.

Certainly, the Dalai Lama would have welcomed Russia's support, but only as an instrument with which to thwart the expansionism of Peking.[31] He had made it amply clear that he regarded China as his country's principal foe ; and all his wiles were concentrated on keeping her rulers at bay. Further, the Tibetan Pontiff was much too shrewd not to appreciate the proximity of British power in India, whose strength had been so emphatically demonstrated by the Younghusband Mission nearly seven years before. When he fled his capital for the second time in February 1910 it was to the sanctuary of India that he directed his steps ; the Russian border, a thousand miles away, was too great a distance for him successfully to elude his Chinese pursuers.

It is also difficult to see what real advantage Britain stood to gain by keeping Bhutan ignorant of the outside world.[32] Surely there were greater rewards in persuading the peoples of the trans-Himalaya to stride toward modernity with British help ; for thus strengthened, they would become less vulnerable to the designs of a predatory power and, therefore, less prone to turn to Simla at the merest hint of trouble. Indeed, such self-assurance as was gained would correspondingly enhance their value as a buffer on India's northern frontiers.

It may however be pointed out in Bell's defence that fear of the Tsarist Empire had for long years been among the most potent traditions of British rule in India ; and in view of this it was perhaps asking too much of a civil servant to accustom himself so quickly to the sudden glare of Anglo-Russian friendship. Moreover, it remained a fact that the deepest instincts of the Raj as a whole made it gravitate towards an accommodation

with the forces of indigenous and often archaic conservatism under the fond delusion that by so doing it was adding to its strength and security.

But even as the merits of British policy towards Tibet were being debated, and the first tentative steps taken in the search for a secure frontier in the mountainous reaches of Upper Assam, momentous developments were afoot in China which were shortly to lead to a new balance of political forces in the Himalayas and beyond. For where it had once been the gradual pressure of Chinese power in Tibet, culminating in Chao Erh-feng's march to Lhasa, that had given a new dimension to Anglo-Tibetan relations, it was now the total collapse of such authority which forced Britain to reassess the scene.

The infant Chinese Republic, ushered in formally on 1 January, 1912, struggled at birth ; its social base insecure ; its political future bleak. In order, therefore, to preserve his country's precarious unity, Sun Yat-sen, the radical nationalist, stood down as President in favour of Yuan Shih-k'ai, the northern conservative, who succeeded him on 10 March, 1912, and whose Prime Minister was none other than T'ang Shao-yi. Uncomfortably harnessed, they symbolised the controlling influences in the new regime ; the coexistence of warlordism and republican nationalism, the first with its strong traditional roots, the second a tender plant striving to survive in a hostile environment.[88]

As Szechuan in western China became one of the storm centres of the Revolution, its value as a proven base of military operations against Tibet was seriously impaired. On 22 December 1911, the Manchu Governor General, Chao Erh-feng, was taken from his palace and executed. So ended the life of one who, more than any other, was responsible for the triumph of Chinese arms from Chamdo to Lhasa. His draconian administration crumbled after him and the troops under his command having once entered the Dalai Lama's capital in glory now found themselves isolated and demoralized. Hemmed in by a force of Tibetans taking fresh heart from this sudden reversal of fortune, it became increasingly evident that only the intercession

of the British could save the besieged Chinese garrison from an unkindly fate.

Although China's sudden collapse may have relieved the pressure in the Himalayas, few illusions were held either at Whitehall or in Simla concerning this temporary respite. She had shown her hand once, and when an effective Government was restored in Peking there could be little doubt that she would again set about achieving her traditional goals. In the last years of the Monarchy, an exercise combining military vigour with deftness in diplomacy had produced the desired political rewards; the reality of Chinese authority at Lhasa being ultimately accepted with no more than the expected squawk of protest. There was no reason why a future regime in Peking should not do as well. Barely had the Manchus been overthrown than a conference of opposition groups meeting on 30 December 1911 to discuss the composition of China's future National Assembly unanimously agreed to invite delegates from Tibet and Mongolia to join as full members of that body. It was a foretaste of things to come.

The Foreign Office was quickly off the mark with a note to the India Office[34] in which it raised three leading questions for Crewe's consideration: first, whether His Majesty's Government would be justified in opposing the inclusion of Tibet in China proper; second, if British interests would be best served by such opposition or whether this was likely to lead to an anti-British outbreak and result in the dismemberment of China's outlying dependencies; third, what steps could be taken to give effect to such opposition? These were the broad guidelines of the dialogue between London and India.

On the first issue all were agreed: the British Government would be right to oppose the absorption of Tibet into China. It was, however, the second and third points which gave rise to argument. Not surprisingly, it was India that came out most strongly against the Chinese,[35] stating that such an inclusion would jeopardise Britain's special interests and privileges in Tibet and, in addition, threaten her influence in Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. (Peking, it must be remembered, had still not

withdrawn its claims to the latter two). India also pointed out, in answer to the Home Government's query, that no anti-Russian outbreak in China had followed the support given by Russia to the new Mongolian regime, and there was thus no reason to suppose that any such demonstration against Britain would be likely if the British announced their opposition to Peking's proposed intention to incorporate Tibet. However, it did not feel confident enough to give an opinion on whether such action by Britain would signal the dismemberment of China's outlying dependencies. But on the need to abjure the use of force it did feel strongly, as it doubted whether naval or military strength could be applied effectively against aggressively inclined officials near the frontier, such demonstrations being more useful near the seat of Government. Furthermore, the Indian military authorities would deprecate local action which would cause an even bigger strain on the already scarce resources of the army. Instead, Simla suggested that a satisfactory solution of the Tibetan problem should be the condition of British recognition of the new Chinese Government. Two other points of note were also made : first, that the Dalai Lama moved by British hospitality and impressed by the fairness and power of the Raj had become a good friend and that, as such, his return to Lhasa would be to Britain's advantage. Secondly, it was emphasised that because of its geographical position, Tibet had to be kept in a state of political isolation.

The Secretary of State's initial reaction was to raise his own demands, suggesting that as a requirement of British recognition China had first to call off her pressure on the Burmese frontier, demonstrate her ability to control her outlying dependencies, as otherwise her assurances concerning the maintenance of foreign rights and privileges would be worthless ; and finally, that China respect Tibetan autonomy by keeping the administration of the country unchanged.

Grey, on the other hand, was quite rightly of the opinion that the dispute on the Burma-Yunnan border concerning Pienma was a local one and merited, at best, a firm note of protest to Peking. Nor was the Foreign Secretary enamoured of Crew's proposal

that China's ability effectively to maintain her authority in her outlying dominions be tested, for to bring 'this new element into the question of recognition, in which His Majesty's Government are compelled to act with so many Powers, might lead to complications, and he would prefer, in the first instance at any rate to deal with it separately'.[36] On the question of Tibet's autonomy, Grey saw no objection to the line taken by Hardinge and Crewe, particularly as Russia had also made reservations about her special rights and interests in Mongolia and northern Manchuria. Apprehensions about the attitude and actions of Russia became a prime consideration in the thinking of the Foreign Office, whose policies were thus never more than reactive. If in British eyes the Anglo-Russian Convention had circumscribed their freedom of action in Central Asia or the Far East, the Tsar's ministers for their part felt no obligation to behave in a similar spirit of self-denial. They were prepared to abide strictly by the letter of their agreement with Britain, no more.

When the question of recognition was referred to Jordan, the British Ambassador, though expressing general accord with the views of the Foreign Secretary, discouraged any equation between British rights in Tibet and Russian rights in Mongolia. In the light of subsequent developments there was an element of unconscious irony in his emphasis that 'our position is stronger than that of Russia, who cannot claim to have any direct treaty relations with Mongolia'. He also favoured confining 'ourselves to a demand for the maintenance of the *status quo* under treaty. If we go further and insist on a measure of autonomy, claimed by Russia for Mongolia we may give other Powers an opportunity of putting forward similar claims, and incur the charge of promoting a policy of dismemberment';[37] thus violating one of the principal tenets of British policy in the Far East, namely, to uphold the territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire.

The repeated references to Mongolia highlighted the fact that developments there were closely akin to events in Tibet. In both countries Chinese authority had collapsed. Each was bordered by the empire of a great European power. But their common experience was more than just circumstantial, bound as they were

by deep ties of culture, religion and political aspiration; points that were to be explicitly incorporated into a treaty of alliance in January 1913.[38]

In late 1911, when the Mongol Princes declared their independence, they did so against the background of a worsening drift in Russo-Chinese relations. Having failed to reach an understanding with Peking over Outer Mongolia, the Russians took positive active action by distributing arms among the Mongols and exploiting to the full their antipathy to the Chinese. The Russian Press clamoured for action. The *Novoe Vremya* of 29 December 1911 denounced China for having enslaved and exploited the Mongols, while the *Bourse Gazette* of the same date, in Buchanan's words, 'urges the utility to Russia of the creation between her and China of a buffer state, which would, while recognising the suzerainty of China, be independent of that Power and under the influence of Russia'.[39] To the British Ambassador, however, Russian officials were at pains to disavow their Government's intention to absorb Mongolia.[40] As much as Britain, Russia too wished to avoid a military conflict, for according to Sazanof, 'All our Ambassadors are like myself of the opinion that, in view of the present international constellation in Europe, a one-sided engagement of the Russian military forces in the Far East must be avoided.'[41] Nothing daunted, Russia set about her task with a skilful blend of economic and political diplomacy in which great trading firms such as the Russian Export Company as well as men on the spot, foremost of whom was Ivan J. Korostovetz, the Imperial Minister at Peking, played an indispensable part. These agents, with no Russian Morley to impede their efforts, worked well in harness with their superiors at home.

But if Russia's policies towards Outer Mongolia were becoming a prime factor in Central Asian politics, of deeper historical significance were the far older ties between Mongolia and Peking: together they cast a giant shadow over Anglo-Tibetan relations.

The complexities of the Sino-Mongol bond become clearer in the light of a cautionary reminder by a contemporary scholar

that the relationship between "China" and "Mongolia" was not the point at issue. What was in contention was the nature of the ties linking the Manchu Emperors and Mongol chiefs. In the course of the seventeenth century the Manchus had first succeeded in subjugating the Inner Mongols and then the Outer Mongols. The earliest known document defining the relations between the Manchu Emperor and the tribes of Inner Mongolia is one dated 1636, in which the Emperor's suzerainty is recognised. Nevertheless it carried a rider 'that should the Dynasty fall, all the laws previously existing should come into force again. In 1688, an assembly of Mongol princes at Dolon Nor decided to submit to the Manchu Emperor. The Chinese later considered this event as marking the formal annexation of Mongolia, but the Mongols claimed that the assembly only paid homage to the Emperor personally.'[42] The Manchus allowed Outer Mongolia a sizeable degree of autonomy, and Chinese colonization there was forbidden until the turn of the 20th century. This act of political submission was complemented by Mongol princes marrying into the Manchu Royal House. In addition, the two races had strong ethnic and cultural links, and through the Tibetan Buddhist Church, expressed their common devotion to one religious faith.

Jordan had at the time of these developments commented in similar vein on the nature of the Sino-Tibetan relationship. Noting the upsurge in Chinese interest in the area following the 1911 Revolution, the British Ambassador remarked :

> It is realised that the Chinese hold upon Thibet was largely a Manchu achievement, which must necessarily have been considerably weakened by the fall of the dynasty. The result has been the almost complete disappearance of Chinese influence in the country, and something more than the gift of a strip in a Chinese republican flag was evidently required to regain the allegiance of the Thibetans.

Sir John then went on to observe that as the secular arm was unable to control Tibet—

> the question must be approached from the spiritual side. Yuan Shih-K'ai has accordingly issued a presidential order, which constitutes a reversal of policy pursued by the late

> Government toward the Dalai Lama, and particularly cancels the decree of the 25th February, 1910, deposing him from his position as supreme Pontiff of the Yellow Church···the solicitude which is shown for the future of Thibet and Mongolia is a foretaste of what may be expected if the President succeeds in establishing a stable form of Government.[43]

China's fears about her future in these countries was closely intertwined : concessions in one might lead to similar demands in the other and eventually result in the loss of both.

Yuan Shi-k'ai's two presidential orders of April 1912 were an advance warning of Peking's grand design.[44] The first, dated 13 April, advocating intermarriage between the five races of the new republic, was an extension of the late Empress Dowager's solution for healing the breach between Chinese and Manchus. According to Jordan the mandate was grotesque and had little chance of being realised, as the Chinese from time immemorial had limited their marriage alliances to their native provinces. Perhaps it was asking too much of an Old China hand, like the British Ambassador, to recognise the first stirrings of a movement whose twin aims were to rejuvenate Chinese society and redefine China's national identity outside the encrusted norms of Confucian ritual and practice.

The second presidential order, dated 21 April, which in Jordan's view was worthy of serious consideration, followed logically from the spirit of the first for, by abolishing the administrative machinary designed especially to control and run the 'dependencies', it paved the way for the integration of Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan into the republic whose unified dominion, at least on paper, exceeded that of the Monarchy in its declining years.

It was urgently realised, both in Whitehall and in Simla, that the new situation in Central Asia called for a thorough review of Britain's Tibetan policy. In all the three Government departments concerned, it was felt that Russian action in Mongolia had morally freed Britain from the self-denying ordinances of her trans-Himalayan commitments. The question was to get Russia to recognise this fact by releasing her treaty partner from

undertakings in the Anglo-Russian Convention pertaining to Tibet. But how ? In 1907, still feeling the effects of the war with Japan, Russia had suggested a common understanding over Mongolia which Minto in particular had refused to countenance. The opportunity of ensuring possible Russian cooperation in a future Tibetan contingency was thus lost. Russia got the support she needed in a bargain with Japan. What could Britain now offer St. Petersburg as a *quid pro quo* ? In the counsels of government alternative lines of action were discussed and argued out at length.

In India, Bell, with Russia always on his brain, saw the sinister shadow of a Tsarist Empire controlling Mongolia, then, by exploiting Mongo-Tibetan ties, creeping through Tibet until it loomed ominously over the Himalayas. The picture, though overdrawn, found some response in the Foreign Office.

W. F. O'Connor's contribution to this debate was by far the more impressive,[45] for, like Bell, he too had grown up in an anti-Russian school; had drunk deeply at the fount of Curzonian wisdom ; yet because of his surer grasp of political realities, he was quick to perceive that Russia no longer constituted a threat to British interests in Tibet. Any lingering doubts had long been removed by the Anglo-Russian Convention, and perhaps by his subsequent experience of working opposite a Russian in Seistan.

The real danger was China. Her aims in Tibet as well as on the Indian frontier had been expansionist ; her assurances to the contrary had invariably been belied by her deeds. The Tibetans having driven out the Chinese were nonetheless too weak to successfully withstand a renewed onslaught from Peking as was likely to occur some time in the future, hence some form of British influence at Lhasa had to be maintained as a safeguard. Since he did not envisage a British protectorate, which would needlessly give rise to international hostility and also disturb public opinion at home, O'Connor recommended the stationing of a British officer in the Tibetan capital. He was thus reviving one of his pet schemes, but now advocated it with renewed vigour, arguing that with the Dalai and Panchen

Lamas friendly to Britain, no popular opposition to such a move need be feared.

Russia had to be approached with a view to working out a mutual arrangement over Mongolia and Tibet. If necessary the British as part of a deal could safely accept a Russian agent at Lhasa, who might even turn out to be co-operative. Even if this were not so there was little he could do to harm Britain, stranded as he would be 1000 miles from his own country ; while the Dalai Lama, having learnt his lesson in 1904, was unlikely to provoke the British again.

To China the message had to be clear : she must restore conditions in Tibet as they prevailed at the time of the Adhesion Convention of 1906, and agree to the scrapping of the 1908 Trade Regulations. Should Peking be unwilling to accept these terms, the British Government ought then to withhold recognition of the new republican regime.

As his concluding remarks show, the former British Trade Agent at Gyantse aired his views to the Viceroy and found him sympathetic. However, while Hardinge may, in the light of his predilections, have agreed with much of what O'Connor had to say, he knew well enough that leading members of the Cabinet would not be as favourably disposed. It was perhaps because of this that Harcourt Butler, the Education member of the Viceroy's Council and a past Foreign Secretary in Simla, could write to Minto in the following vein : 'Dear old O'Connor got half at the Viceroy over the old game of a Resident at Lhasa, or thought he had but when it came to facts the proposal fell through as of old.'[46] He himself favoured a deal with Russia over Mongolia which would result in Britain getting back the Chumbi Valley. Yet for the British to take possession of this strategic valley now would only have alienated the Tibetans. O'Connor realising this, wisely refrained from even alluding to the subject. The opportune moment for such a move had come and gone in 1907-8.

But although the changed situation called for fresh thinking, the Cabinet was unwilling to deviate from what it considered to be old and tested policies. The friction that was to

develop between the Home Government and India over the Laden La mission to Lhasa was a classic case in point, as not only did it underline the broad divergence of view between them; it also emphasised the difficulties of men on the spot who were required to respond to events in the uncomfortable knowledge that they did not entirely possess the trust of their superiors.

It was a Tibetan appeal to the British to mediate between themselves and the remnants of the Chinese force besieged in Lhasa that presented the Viceroy with his dilemma. The Nepalese for different reasons were plainly not acceptable in such a role either to Lhasa or to him. If Hardinge could get one of his men to undertake this delicate mission successfully, then his aim of getting the last body of Chinese troops out of Tibet by having them transported home through India would be achieved. It would, furthermore, deny Peking the excuse to send in a relief column in whose wake might follow the tide of Chinese military power.

The Viceroy chose Laden La, a Deputy Superintendent of the Bengal Police to lead the mission to Lhasa, and his judgement could rarely have been sounder. For the man in question was of Sikkimese extraction, a Buddhist, fluent in Tibetan, Nepali and English, and, not least, had been on special duty with the Dalai Lama during his years of exile in Darjeeling.[47]

To Hardinge's suggestion, Crewe, though he did not at first demur, wavered. He emphasised that Laden La should keep strictly to the letter of his instructions and not interfere in the domestic politics of Tibet. And in accordance with Article 3 of the Anglo-Russian Convention, he would see to it that Russia was duly informed. But as he delayed his telegram of formal assent, India, mistaking his silence for acquiescence, ordered Laden La to set off on his journey. Hardly had he done so than the Secretary of State was wiring the Viceroy to stop him proceeding further. The Home Government apparently feared that Laden La's journey might lead to an entanglement in Tibet and unnecessarily complicate relations with Russia.[48] The officer, who was eventually contacted a few miles short of Lhasa, turned back immediately for the Indian border.

The Viceroy, quite naturally, was put out by these developments. Writing to his friend, Nicolson, he enquired if it was the Foreign Office or the Cabinet that as a whole had compelled Simla against its better judgment 'to recall Laden La from his mission to Lhasa. We do not consider' continued Hardinge,

> that it would have involved any breach of our agreement with Russia, while the advantages to be obtained from a successful negotiation were obvious. The position is really a very extraordinary one, since both the Tibetans, the Chinese in Tibet, the Chinese Government and our Minister at Peking, are all begging us to do what we have done our best to do but are not allowed to do by our own Government. It is a great pity that this chance has been lost of establishing really friendly relations with the Tibetans, and it is not very likely to occur again.[49]

The decision, replied Nicolson, was the Cabinet's. He felt that it was not so much the Convention with Russia which made them oppose Laden La's journey, as the possibility that the Chinese expedition at present preparing to march into Tibet from Szechuan might disregard any agreement arrived at in Lhasa and seek to wreak vengeance on the helpless Tibetans, thus casting an additional responsibility on British shoulders. And the fact that no pressure could effectively be brought to bear on Peking since the Central Government had lost control over the provincial authorities made the Cabinet even less likely to risk an adventure. Nicolson himself was sympathetic to Hardinge's predicament. While expressing optimism about an understanding with Russia over Mongolia, he concluded thus :

> However, I am much afraid that the tendency of the present day is to avoid taking any responsibility whatsoever, or, indeed, of adopting any policy which has an element of vigour and foresightedness. This is evidenced not only in China but throughout the world. I suppose it is a malady which attacks every Government who is in power for any length of time and feels that its future tenure is somewhat uncertain.[50]

If any one person was responsible for blocking Hardinge's plan, it was Morley. It was, in the first place, he who had

pressured Crewe into placing the matter before the Cabinet, on whose members the former Secretary of State was then able to bring his formidable influence to bear. He would not want to interfere to the extent of recalling Laden La, he remarked soothingly, but 'Hardinge must take the responsibility, if any mischief happens···for he must see that his action might involve trouble with China, Tibet, Russia.'[51] Morley continued to be an invaluable aid to Grey, just as he had been during his days at the India Office.

In seeking to make the Viceroy culpable for any untoward developments that might possibly occur, Morley exposed one of the most vulnerable points in his armoury, for Hardinge was a civil servant, not a politician. All his working life he had been trained to advise, to stick to his brief, but to leave the major decisions to his political masters. Such deeply ingrained habits are not easily eschewed. It may be recalled that, when as the new Viceroy, he brushed aside the Governor of Assam's plea for a firmer line in the Himalyas he had argued that force against China could only effectively be used on the Chinese coast. His reasoning may have sprung from a faulty understanding of the situation but could it not also be that he was, consciously or otherwise, drawing back from taking a decision which could breach the peace with a foreign power and was, therefore, rightly a matter for his superiors at Whitehall ? Later, when he himself had come to accept the need for a more vigorous policy in the Himalayas and was advocating the adoption of measures which would ensure its success, he stopped short of recommending the use of force. Again, the reasons he cited for abstaining from such action may have been perfectly sound but the underlying contradiction did not go unnoticed in the Foreign Office.[52] It was as if he felt that a decision to embark on hostilities was a burden which should be borne in London alone. Nicolson's lament on the disinclination of Governments to accept responsibility not only echoed Hardinge's dilemma; it highlighted one of the deeper problems of Britain's imperial diplomacy during this period.

However discouraging the attitude of the Home Government,

Hardinge must surely have been fortified by the arrival of two letters from Chirol containing more than just ritualistic expressions of sympathy. In the first, the Foreign Editor of *The Times* described a meeting with O'Connor, which had convinced him that Morley's insistence on remaining strictly aloof from Tibetan affairs was now out of date.

> 'It seems to me,' he continued, 'that this is just one of the questions which ought to have been thrashed out befor our Government committed itself to countenancing the proposed huge loan to China. For myself, I am extremely doubtful about the whole policy of loaning money to China in existing circumstances. I am afraid the F. O. is inclined to listen exclusively to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank.'[53]

His second letter contained a point even more telling; for it urged the necessity of presenting the interests of the peoples of India to the Imperial Government in the forthright manner displayed by the White Dominions. 'Now it is clear to me,' he concluded,

> 'that the Government of India does not possess that authority. You know better than I do how often it is over-ruled from Whitehall in deference to the narrow interests of these islands or still the narrower interests of the party in office. It is this that will have to be modified in any readjustment of relations between component members of the Empire if, in the long run, we are to preserve India to the Empire.'[54]

But for Grey and the Foreign Office, it was the alliance with Russia which provided the axis around which British foreign policy revolved. Writing to Lord Stamfordham,[55] the King's Private Secretary, Nicolson recognised that public opinion at home remained suspicious of Russia, but pointed out that the balance of advantage arising from the Anglo-Russian Convention lay firmly in Britain's favour. As such, the breakdown of the Agreement would not only be generally detrimental to British interests in Europe and Asia; it could, conceivably, have an adverse affect on relations with France. And while the Russian Government had shown a strong desire to keep faith with Britain, there existed another party in Russia who were opposed to this accord. In view of these factors, observed Nicolson, the need to

continue supporting the Anglo-Russian understanding was the call of the hour. For him and his colleagues, the road to Lhasa lay through St. Petersburg. Yet a diplomatic journey so tortuous, could only have been accomplished under the guidanee of one blessed with a clear head and a firm hand. As it was, they were still struggling to free their Government from the coils of its understanding with Russia when the chasm of the First World War swallowed them all.

In Peking, the difficulties facing Jordan were formidable. The Chinese invariably procastinated and his representations on Tibet rarely, if ever, achieved results. The British Ambassador was a diplomat with great exprerience of the Far East ; he was not unsympathetic to China's point of view ; he certainly preferred her people to Japan's ; but the Confucian society with which he was so well acquainted was fast crumbling ; the slow moving conservative Manchus had given way to a rising generation of Chinese nationalists moved by radical impulses, seeking new truths and new solutions. It was a transition on the grand scale, and through the accompanying chaos and confusion, Jordan had to keep watch over Britain's commercial interest in China : to see that these were not harmed either by government decree or by popular agitation. His despatches mirrored his predicament ; for although on occassion his assessment of Chinese policy proved hard and true the same cannot be said of his proposed Tibetan settlement.

On 23 June, 1912, Jordan accompanied by Alston and Barton, two senior officials of his Embassy, called on Yuan Shih-k'ai. Disquieting news of an expedition from Szechuan whose intended destination was Lhasa had reached the British, and the Chinese President was asked if this were true. He stated in reply that it was only designed to protect Chinese life and property in the marches and gather relevant information pertaining to the area. After its report had been received, a proper policy for Tibet would be drawn up by the Cabinet. Sir John then pressed the President to give an assurance that the expedition would not cross the Tibetan boundary without prior consultation with Britain. Yuan hesitated on grounds of constitutional propriety :

such a guarantee could only be given after he had consulted with his ministers, but he did promise to keep the British Ambassador informed of their progress towards a decision. Jordan hoped that the decision arrived at would not jeopardise Tibetan rights as allowed for under treaty, which China had consistently violated in the past.

Yuan disclaimed any desire of incorporating Tibet as a province of China or of altering arrangements based on existing treaties. Again the question was a matter for the Cabinet and, perhaps, the proper course for Sir John would be to address himself to the Wai-chiao Pu (the new name of the Chinese Foreign Office).

Exasperated, no doubt,

> Sir John Jordan replied that he had made representations on this subject to Mr. Hu, the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, exactly a month ago—on the 24th May. Mr. Hu had promised to lay them before the President and inform him of the result. In spite of this, not a word in reply had been received from the Wai-chiao Pu. Moreover, there had been a great deal of correspondence on this subject during the past few years, and many verbal and written assurances had been given by the former Government; but the Wai-chiao Pu were inclined to ignore engagements and precedents...[58]

The Ambassador warned that the moment Chinese troops crossed the Tibetan frontier, British loan payments to China would stop; however, if it was the fate of its garrison at Lhasa which was causing concern to Peking, an arrangement to evacuate it through India could be made, and to achieve that end, he was prepared to get in touch with Simla. Ironically, he lent substance to the Indian Government's view by affirming the necessity for a third party to mediate between the two combatants, neither of whom had the slightest trust in each other.

The interview was a classic of its type; full of subtle feints and thrusts, but ending with China standing her ground and the British Sisyphus doomed to begin his labours afresh. Sure enough, some six weeks later, on 14 August, Jordan was informed by China's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs that in

view of the perilous position of the Chinese garrison at Lhasa a combined military expedition from Szechuan and Yunnan was being sent. This decision was made available to Britain in accordance with a promise made by Yuan Shi-k'ai. Two days later, the President of the Republic denied all knowledge of having instructed his Vice-Minister to communicate in such terms. He repudiated any intention of sanctioning a military expedition to Tibet, though a number of provinces were pressing him to do so, preferring to work through the Dalai Lama. The affair was the result of a misunderstanding, observed Yuan, with the Vice-Minister probably having confused the President's views with those held by the Wai-chiao Pu.[57]

However, not all Chinese favoured the forcible or immediate incorporation of Tibet into their country. A minority view envisaging a less drastic solution was aired by Wen Tsung-yao, a Cantonese educated in America, who had served as Secretary to the Canton Viceroy from 1905-08 and then become Assistant Resident at Lhasa from June 1908 to March 1910, before being recalled in disgrace for his allegedly pro-Tibetan views. Wen's differences with his compatriots were over means, not ends.

> He compared the policy of Great Britain with regard to Thibet with that of the Chinese, stating that the Thibetans said the British treated them like brothers, while the Chinese treated them like dogs. It was a mistake to alienate the Thibetans...and this the Chinese were certainly doing by their treatment of the Lamas, who were held in great respect by the Thibetans, and, by their overbearing manner towards the latter, compelling, for example, high Thibetan officials to stand or kneel in the presence of the Chinese resident...Wen Tsung-yao considered that China's policy toward Thibet should be that of peaceful penetration, which could not be completely successful under a generation. It was useless to try to educate the present generation to new ideas ; but at any rate, the Chinese could avoid alienating their sympathies. Schools, however, should be set up and the younger generation should learn the Chinese language and imbibe Chinese ideas. Chinese colonists should be given inducements to settle in Thibet and inter-marry with Thibetans. Communications, consisting of wide mule tracks, should be opened up. He considered that there was plenty of suitable land in Thibet for colonisation, and the climate would suit Chinese.[58]

This indeed was a summing up of China's age-old historical experience involving for the most part contact with less developed 'barbarian' peoples on her borders some of whom were culturally and racially absorbed over a period of centuries, while others more stubborn, were driven deeper into the heartland of Asia. Mongolia was a leading case in point.

Meanwhile in Upper Assam the various expeditions of 1911-12 had returned and submitted their reports.[59] The Government of India in keeping with the recommendation made to it favoured the immediate opening of a police post at Rotung as part of peaceful pacification of the Abor tribes,[60] which Crewe in deference to the prevailing views of the Cabinet refused to sanction.[61] This attitude of the Home Government brings to mind the comments made in July 1911 by an exasperated Arthur Hirtzel when his colleagues at the Foreign Office balked at the idea of Indian officers undertaking tours of duty beyond the Outer Line.

> 'They do not understand,' he wrote, 'that administration of this kind of country in the sense in which Yorkshire or even the N.W. Frontier Province is administered is impossible. Administration, as I explained to Sir F. Campbell, means a tour—lasting at the outside six months—by a Political Officer every year ; and there is nothing to prevent a Chinese Tao tai from touring there for the remaining six months.'[62]

The Foreign Office by calling for an end to such practices was thus clearing the ground for a Chinese frontier to march alongside settled British districts in the plains with no natural barrier in-between.

In one of the most important documents of this period the General Staff having dwelt on the weak points of the present *de facto* frontier sketched a rough outline of one more suitable to India's strategic requirements with this warning :

> Throughout this note the assumption is made that the pertinacity of the Chinese will not long permit of their acquiesence in the present state of affairs in Tibet. Although their activity on our frontier may have received a temporary check on account of the Revolution, history proves that succeeding a Revolution, as a rule, a period of natural vigour and expansion follows. A renewal of activity may therefore

be expected. Moreover, the Republican Government has revealed its intention of making the new China a Military Power, and we have received news that the Chinese are already sending parties to align the frontier with the republican flag on the borders of Assam.

There is therefore no time to be lost in declaring to the Chinese in unmistakable terms the line the frontier is to follow, in making our occupation of that line effective in so far as placing ourselves in positions whence we can watch developments and prevent further encroachments is concerned, and in improving communications on our side. By reason of the effect produced by the expeditions of last season—although the effect may have been discounted to some extent, in the case of the Abors, by the withdrawal from Rotung—, the present time is a propitious one to carry on and complete the work of survey and exploration through out these regions. It is therefore worthwhile to make the effort now ; if we delay, the necessity for so doing may, later on, be forced on us at a greater expenditure of force and money.[63]

Fortunately, the Home Government's obstruction over the post at Rotung and its excessively cautious attitude towards the whole enterprise presented no permanent obstacles ; and the work of frontier exploration with Hardinge's encouragement and McMahon's firm direction went forward to its climax in 1914.

Whatever the difficulties the search for a frontier in Assam had, thus far, been conspicuously more successful than the search for a Tibetan policy in Whitehall. Prodded by India,[64] Crewe had shown uncharacteristic firmness in withdrawing Nepal and Bhutan from the scope of Anglo-Chinese discussions ;[65] generally he had been content to wait upon events. By the end of June 1912 the Dalai Lama, full of gratitude and goodwill towards the British, had left for his capital. Had Laden La been allowed to complete his planned journey and receive the Dalai Lama when he arrived, the conjunction of events would have signalled a rare diplomatic triumph. Morley's inflexible wisdom had, however, decreed otherwise.

The situation was effectively at a stalemate when the Secretary of State decided to break the impasse. The Foreign

Office was informed that the time had come to formulate in definite terms a British policy towards Tibet and to that end the following points were put forward for Grey's consideration[66] : first, that His Majesty's Government, while accepting China's suzerain rights in Tibet, were not prepared to accede to her sovereignty over that country ; second, that they would not accept China's right to intervene actively in the internal administration of Tibet, which should remain in Tibetan hands subject to the right of Great Britain and China under Article 1 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of April 1906 to take such steps as were necessary to secure the fulfilment of treaty stipulations ; third, on these grounds the British Government would refuse to recognise the incorporation of Tibet into China as provided for by Yuan Shih-k'ai's presidential decrees ; fourth, Britain, although accepting China's right to station a representative with a suitable escort at Lhasa, with authority to advise Tibet as to its foreign relations, could not agree to the presence of an unlimited number of Chinese troops either within the Tibetan capital or in the country as a whole ; fifth, that the British Government would insist on the conclusion of a written agreement on the foregoing lines before recognizing the Chinese Republic ; and lastly, all communications between China and Tibet through India would be closed until a satisfactory Anglo-Chinese agreement had been reached. However, this provision, as Yuan Shih-k'ai had been informed did not apply to the present Chinese garrison at Lhasa which could, if it wished, return home via India.

Crewe's proposals became the genesis of the famous Jordan Memorandum of 17 August 1912,[67] to the Wai-chiao Pu ; indeed the provisions of the Secretary of State's draft were reproduced almost in their entirety. The document was not intended as an ultimatum but as a basis for fresh negotiations between Britain and China. Scrupulous as ever, the Foreign Office informed Russia of its contents. However, Peking in true style procrastinated, and the year was almost out before the British were able to evoke a firm response.

Jordan grumbled that as Yuan Shih-k'ai—to whom he was

partial—was under pressure from hotheads from Szechuan and Yunnan it was a pity not more was being done to remove the Chinese garrison at Lhasa, the cry for whose 'relief is stirring up a certain amount of military enthusiasm which it may be hard to check.'[68] Sir John's reproach directed at Simla was patently unfair. The Viceroy had made known his Government's willingness to allow the besieged Chinese to use the more convenient route through India for their journey home. It was for them to secure their own release from their Tibetan captors as Laden La's endeavours had been nullified by the Cabinet in London.

Whatever else, Hardinge showed no lack of concern about India's northern frontier. He drew Crewe's attention[69] to the arrival of a Russian force in China's Sinking province (known also as the New Dominion), on the pretext of protecting Russian lives and property in the face of local disturbances, observing that Russia's policy of peaceful penetration, if unchecked, could become a menace to Indian interests. But he firmly rejected the proposal of Macartney, the British Consul-General, to send a similar detachment of Indian troops to Kashgar; thus no charge of seeking to pursue a forward policy could be laid at India's door. The Viceroy was merely pointing out that the fruits of the Anglo-Russian understanding were habitually falling into Russia's basket.

The India Office took up the matter with the Foreign Office, suggesting that it might even be advantageous to accept Russia's action at Kashgar provided Britain were released from the restrictive aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention in Tibet. The question had assumed a compelling urgency with the northern frontier of India and Burma now needing greater attention. Nepal, too, whose friendship was vital to British India, had been solemnly assured that her interests in Lhasa would not be allowed to suffer on account of recent developments in Tibet. Russia's own policies towards Mongolia and China meant that relations between the three Powers were being recast : Central Asia in a word, was in a state of flux, hence this was an opportune moment for Britain to consider anew her own interests in the region.[70]

The permanent staff of the Foreign Office responded with commendable promptness. Not insensitive to the possible gravity of the situation, they produced three separate minutes under the initials of Nugent, Gregory and Crowe, on 26 August, 1 and 2 September 1912, in the form of a general memorandum.[71] Its salient points may be thus summed up: with a British protectorate over Tibet ruled out by the Government of India on military and political grounds, Tibet's relation to India could be put on the same footing as Nepal and Bhutan. In order to achieve this end; to maintain the influence of the Government of India and their present friendly relations with Dalai Lama, the establishment of a British agent at Lhasa holding semi-diplomatic status similar to that enjoyed by the present Resident in Nepal was suggested. To have such a man in the Tibetan capital would be an insurance against future developments which could be detrimental to British interests, such as a new forward policy undertaken by a reinvigorated China singly or in conjunction with other European Powers; or the possibility of Nepal going to war in defence of her commercial rights and privileges. Briefly, Tibet, whatever the external symbols of the relationship, had to be firmly dependent on India. An effective machinery should be set up for keeping out the Chinese on the one hand and the Russians on the other. There was small danger of Russia getting a foothold in Nepal: and there was little to fear from the Chinese if they were kept out of Tibet. The two cases were therefore not quite parallel: even the possibility of a Russian resident at Lhasa, unwelcome though that prospect, could be discussed; nonetheless Britain had to insure against both Chinese and Russian influence in Tibet, so that the machinery for controlling it ought consequently to be more effective and better organised than in Nepal. However, the machinery was for the Indian Government to suggest. For the present it was essential that Britain had a completely free hand through separate agreements with Russia and China.

> 'It is no good at this point,' said Gregory, 'shirking the reality of our requirements, and, if it is undesirable to call things by their proper name, at least we should make quite

sure that we are obtaining them to the full, and really making our position secure and solid. Only if this is done will it be really possible to obtain permanently the object desired and prevent further trouble with China and Russia.'

Crowe had few illusions about the hurdles to be crossed :

The difficulties of any revision of the agreement with Russia and of practically ousting the Chinese from Thibet after having played into their hands during the years of inactivity, if not encouragement, will undoubtedly be great.

The policy of His Majesty's Government in first going to Lhassa and then retiring without making any arrangements for securing either a recognition of British or of the stability of any native authority was much criticised at the time. It looks as if the India Office have now come to the conclusion that the policy of negation was a mistake. But meanwhile we have put serious obstacles in our own way by tying our hands by the Russian agreement.

But would Russia free Britain from the restrictive obligations of the 1907 Convention on Tibet in exchange for a free hand in Mongolia and the New Dominion ? The general view was that Russia would consider the question favourably, having, in the first instance, made a preliminary sounding herself through Cambon, the French Ambassador to the Court of St. James, about a possible deal between the two countries modelled on the Moroccan treaty of 1904 between Britain and France. The Foreign Office had not, at the time, been responsive to this overture but the moment to re-open the question had now arrived. The danger was that Mongolia and the New Dominion (Sinkiang) would pass under the Russian sphere in the normal course of events, in which case Britain presented with a *fait accompli* would have no cards left to play. At present the British had an opportunity of conceding to Russia as a favour what they eventually would find impossible to keep from her. With these factors in mind, it was recommended that Britain should contact Russia immediately—Sazanof's forthcoming visit to London would be a suitable occasion—with the intention of securing a modification of the 1907 Convention and gaining a free hand for herself in Tibet. Russia, no doubt, would name her price but at least Britain would know at once the full extent of Russian

designs. The new solution between the two Powers should be a published agreement with secret clauses, as a secret annulment of the 1907 Agreement followed by the sudden appearance of a British Resident at Lhasa would give rise to needless and unjustifiable suspicion abroad.

Meanwhile, at the end of August 1912 news had reached India that the Chinese garrison in Lhasa, having run out of food and ammunition, had given up the struggle and negotiated terms of surrender with their captors under the auspices of the Nepalese Resident. Under these they were required to hand over their arms before being permitted to return home via India. They would he supplied with provisions on the way. Those among them who had married local women and wished to stay for this and other reasons would be allowed to do so provided they accepted Tibetan citizenship. It was by any standard a generous settlement which effectively gave the lie to inspired rumours of a possible massacre circulating in Peking. Indeed, greater significance should be attached to the performance of the Chinese in discharging their pledges. One clause in the agreement signed on 12 August stipulated that they would leave the country in three groups within fifteen days. The first party left as planned. The other two stayed on for another five months harrassing their hosts until they were forcibly put on the road to India on 6 January, 1913.[72]

The stage was thus set for an elaborate Chinese ploy of force, persuasion and diplomatic craft. While the Chinese force in Lhasa indulged in sporadic fighting and kept the Tibetans unsettled, the news that reinforcements were on their way from Szechuan would, it was hoped, not only further undermine Tibetan morale, but by doing so enable the relieving force to enter the country in triumph as Chao Erh-feng's men had done two years before. But even as the Chinese were gathering strength to pass through the Tibetan marches in safety, where the Khambas barred their way, the Dalai Lama was offered a sweetener in the form of a presidential order dated 28 October 1912, reinstating him as head of the Yellow Church (he had been deposed by a similar decree after his flight to India).

The British, on the other hand, were met with the refrain that as Chinese were in danger of being massacred, Peking was reluctantly obliged to sanction the despatch of an armed expedition in order to rescue them. Bell drew attention to the speciousness of the plea,[73] and even Jordan's attitude hardened visibly at this subterfuge. In a note to Grey, he observed that recent developments had shown that China's aims in Tibet remained unchanged. He noted the appointment of a Chinese magistrate in the Assam frontier.

> 'Such an appointment,' concluded Sir John, 'can only be regarded as the latest evidence of that peaceful penetration and persistency of purpose which has marked every incident of the Chinese campaign against Thibet, and which is unlikely to be abandoned until they have reached the line at which their neighbours are prepared to check their advance by physical and moral pressure.'[74]

In London the Foreign Office had awaited Sazanof's visit to Britain in late September 1912 before broaching the subject of Tibet to the Russians. Shortly after his arrival Nicolson aired, what he waa careful to emphasise, were his private views to Hardinge, according to which the British should confine themselves to informing their Russian guest, that in the light of recent developments in Tibet, they found it vitally necessary to have an agent at Lhasa. Laden La, possibly, would be the best man for the job. Sir Arthur was not in favour of making a bargain over Mongolia and Kashgar as the Chinese might otherwise think that Britain was 'assisting Russia in despoiling them of some of their territory.'[75] But while these compunctions, sharpened no doubt by a mixture of economic and moral considerations, may have done him credit, it was quite clear that the Permanent Under Secretary had yet to appreciate thc workings of the Russian mind.

As the air hung heavy with the threat of a fresh Balkan crisis, and the Foreign Office were averse to pursuing the matter, the Tibetan question did not figure prominently in the talks between Sazanof and the British leaders. However, even if these unforeseen circumstances not intruded, it is still doubtful

whether a solution to the problem would have been found. The Russians were quite content to keep things as they were, as they had no major interests in Tibet, while the British for their part were having no end of trouble even drawing up a Tibetan policy, let alone applying one. Nicolson complained to the Viceroy :

> I wish that our Government could make up its mind to adopt your suggestion to send an agent to Lhassa, but I fear that they are disinclined to do so. They seem haunted by apprehensions that he might meet with the same fate which befell our agent at Kabul many years ago...[76]

Two months later, Sir Walter Langley, the Assistant Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office was echoing these views to Jordan.[77] According to Langley, the Government of India and the permanent staff of the India Office were champing at the bit for a more active policy, but Morley's influence in the Cabinet coupled with a general disinclination to do anything that could lead to another Tibetan expedition made it doubtful if the Home Government would adopt this line, a reluctance with which Sir Walter was in broad sympathy.

Until such time as his Government's aims were formalised in Mongolia, Sazanof cleverly kept alive British hopes of a deal over Tibet. He had told Crewe that what Britain did there was of little concern to Russia (although he did say that jingoes at home were pressing him not to make any one-sided concessions on the subject),[78] a view which the Japanese Ambassador in London also relayed to Grey after his conversations with the Russian Foreign Minister.[79] The British were also informed by their guest that Mongolia and Tibet were unrelated issues. Meanwhile, the Tsar's agents went about their task of detaching Outer Mongolia from the Chinese Empire, comfortable in the knowledge that Britain, keen to keep St. Petersburg in good humour, would do nothing to impede their progress with the traditional objection that China's territorial integrity was being violated.

On 3 November 1912 a Russo-Mongol Agreement and

Protocol was signed[80] by which Russia agreed to provide military aid to the Mongols in their struggle against China in return for which the Russians were offered far-reaching economic rights and privileges in Mongolia. The treaty, a triumphant culmination to years of patient endeavour, was one of the major achievements of Russian diplomacy in Central Asia.

In China news of the agreement was greeted by a tremendous clamour for war. Jordan observed that while this agitation was pathetic and even grotesque in its futility 'it indicates a consciousness of nationality which it would be unwise to overlook.'[81] For Britain in particular the warning was clear :

> ....it should be remembered that our position in China is infinitely more vulnerable than that of Russia. Our immense trade interests all over the country are a hostage for our good behaviour and expose us to retaliatory measures from which Russia is immune.[82]

In London the Chinese Minister had told Grey that what had caused most offence to his government about the Russo-Mongol Treaty was that Russia by dealing directly with Mongolia had by-passed China[83]—which confirmed the India Office in their view that the threat of direct negotiations with Tibet would probably be more potent than any other.

The India Office in a lengthy note to the Foreign Office recalled that Sir John Jordan favoured the idea of a fresh agreement with Russia over Tibet although, like the Government of India, he was averse to including Chinese Turkestan. Indeed, as Sazanof had disclaimed designs upon it, it should not be a stumbling block in Anglo-Russian negotiations. In keeping with Sir John's suggestion however, the India Office proposed that Russian action in Mongolia might form the basis of a transaction. Sazanof would no doubt argue, as he had already done, when Grey broached the subject to him during his visit to England in September, that Tibet and Mongolia were not in *pari materia*, which was correct insofar as the one was the subject of a convention with Britain and the other was not. On the other hand, the Russo-Mongolian agreement by declaring

Mongolia to be autonomous had altered the status of an integral part of China and the British Goverment's acquiescence could not be taken for granted. What Britain sought in Tibet was not something to which Russians could in good faith take exception;

> for it is not the extension of British influence, but simply the restoration of the status quo recognised by the Anglo-Russian Convention, and its maintenance by more effective means than are admitted by that instrument. For this purpose what is required is a modification of the arrangement for 1907 in the direction of allowing Great Britain to enter into negotiations with Thibet, and to send a representative to Lhassa when the relations between Great Britain and Thibet render such a course neceesary.
>
> But if Sir E. Grey thinks that no such modification is practicable, it only remains to appraise the Russian Government in due course of the action which His Majesty's Government propose to take in present circumstances. It might at the same time be desirable to sound them as to their attitude in the event of it appearing advisable, for the purpose of assisting the Thibetans against Chinese aggression, to lend them money, arms, and (temporarily) British officers for the organisation of their army.[84]

The Foreign Office were not agreeable to any modification of the 1907 Convention fearing that Russia, in keeping with Sazanof's view that Tibet and Mongolia were not *in pari materia*, would meet any such British request with a demand for a *quid pro quo* in Afghanistan. Langley felt it best to do nothing for the present, but to let Russia know what Britain proposed to do once the Government had made up its mind. Nicolson was concerned above all to keep faith with an ally by upholding the Convention, a view with which Grey was in complete accord.[85] A note incorporating these points was thus drafted and despatched to the India Office.[86]

Just before the year was out the Chinese finally indicated to Jordan that they were prepared to open negotiations with Britain on the basis of the British Memorandum of 17 August 1912. But it was to be another eight months before these assurances were eventually fulfilled. Hardinge had expressed the hope that China by responding tardily to Britain's overtures would force the Home Government to renounce their obligations

towards her as regards Tibet and enter into relations with the Dalai Lama [87] The Viceroy's expectations were stillborn, as China's procrastination was matched by an almost total lack of urgency at Whitehall. In the Foreign Office there were lengthy discussions on the consequences of Russian action in Mongolia ; much talk of circulating, in conjunction with the India Office, a paper on Tibet to the Cabinet but the will to act seemed lost in this labyrinth of words. The practised eye of a senior civil servant like Langley was nevertheless able to discern amid this confusion that,

> We are at present marking time about Mongolia as nothing has been settled yet about the Tibet policy, and the India Office are anxious that we should have something to play with if the decision of the Cabinet entails an arrangement with Russia. European affairs are still in such a tangle that it is difficult to get any attention paid to other questions.[88]

The same surely must have been also true for Russia, yet she was doing extremely well for herself in Central Asia and the Far East.

The Government of India suggested a possible alternative for Britain : to allow China to return to Tibet subject to an agreement by which she would agree to an adjustment to India's north-east frontier, and to a small rectification of the boundary between Nepal and Tibet which would concede to the former control of the passes dividing the two countries. It could be argued that this would relieve India of the responsibility of acting in Tibet, thereby lessening the strain on her military resources, a matter of considerable importance particularly if a crisis arose, for example, in Persia. Against this proposal it could be said that Russia might object to the frontier rectification envisaged on the ground that it violated the 1907 Convention. In India's eyes its real weakness was that it

> would not be fair to the people of Thibet, who would look upon it as a breach of faith, and would be robbed of the confidence they now feel in us. They would thus be open to easy persuasion to arguments of Russia. Nor are we of opinion that we can count implicitly on China's continuing to be a friendly neighbour for long.[89]

The India Office then produced a memorandum[90] incorporating the points raised by the Indian Government and exploring others, such as unleashing Nepal at Tibet as Lee Warner had once advocated, but rejecting it as dangerous for reasons similar to those given by Curzon. The document emphasised that there were no compelling commercial, political or strategic interests for Britain to have relations with Tibet for their own sake ; it was essentially towards the safety of the Himalayan borderland that British eyes were directed. East of Bhutan on the Indian side of the tribal belt lay some of the richest districts of Assam in which much European and Indian capital had been sunk ; farther west lay the states of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal, the first two bound by treaty to India in a subordinate relationship, the third having only a friendly informal arrangement with the British. All three had cultural, ethnic and commercial ties with Tibet which a hostile Power from Lhasa could exploit or seek to undermine, thereby generating new tensions along the Himalayas ; a possibility which in the light of recent developments Britain could no longer ignore.

However, no papers were placed before the Cabinet and the impasse over Tibet continued. The Foreign Office which had at one time regarded an Anglo-Russian arrangement over that country with hope seemed now to be in mortal dread of losing Russia's friendship should Britain press for discussions on the subject. Grey and Nicolson were the two individuals most responsible for this shift in attitude. While the Foreign Secretary, haunted by the spectre of unnecessary diplomatic entanglements sought, above all, to keep a free hand for Britain, his Permanent Under-Secretary increasingly came to see the Russian alliance as his country's life line. Nicolson feared that disputes in Persia and Central Asia would lead the Russians to resume the offensive along the Indian frontiers. At the risk of being considered an infatuated Russophile, he never wavered in his conviction that the Russian Entente was even more important for Britain than the French and its nourishment essential to British safety.[91]

When Nicolson communicated his views that sooner or later

Britain would have to approach Russia in order to revise their agreement over Tibet, Sir George Buchanan expressed assent. For while he did not doubt the good faith of the Russian Government and the absence of any intention on their part to gain a foothold in the Dalai Lama's country, he was less sure about the reliability of their agents, and as such, thought it wise to forestall any action from that quarter. But the British Ambassador counselled patience, as the most opportune moment to raise the subject was after the current acute stage of the Balkan crisis had passed, and Sazanof had his hands free.[92] The favourable hour finally arrived in May 1913 when the Balkan crisis was over, with Russia feeling particularly grateful to Britain for her support.[93]

The bureaucratic wheels were once again set in motion and the search for a Tibetan policy resumed. This decision must have been greeted with relief by British representatives abroad. Langley had managed to buy time from Jordan by soothingly reassuring him that it was the cumbersome machinery of the India Office and the Government of India that was causing the delay.[94] Had this stalemate continued the British Ambassador might have begun suspecting the real truth. Hardinge, too, was getting impatient. How long, he asked, would things be allowed to drift ? The portents at Kashgar seemed ominous and if Russia made a forward move there Britain would have to move in relation to Tibet.[95] To his friend Chirol he was even franker in his complaints. Britain had acted loyally to Russia about Tibet ; indeed so scrupulous had she been that the Foreign Office had even prohibited him from writing harmless letters to the Dalai Lama, then in India, lest it be construed as a violation of the 1907 Convention. In order to alter this one-sided arrangement it was imperative to open discussions with Russia, who should renounce all interest in Tibet save that of the purely religious involving her Buriat subjects ; but Britain must be permitted to send an agent to Lhasa, communicate directly with the Dalai Lama, and offer him advice.[96]

However, it would be wrong to suppose that no exchange of ideas had taken place during this period between Jordan,

Hardinge, and their respective departments in Whitehall. Each had sounded out the other on the possible nature of a new conference involving Britain, Tibet and China. The British Ambassador ruled out the suggestion of an Anglo-Chinese agreement to which Tibet would later accede or of Sino-Tibetan talks under British auspices, arguing in favour of a tripartite conference, the need for which was eventually accepted.[97] The Foreign Office had feared that full British participation would restrict the government's liberty of action and only after much persuasion did they signify their agreement to Jordan's proposal.[98]

At the end of May, the British Charge' d'affaires at St. Petersburg, O'Beirne, reported that Sazanof had no objection to the British idea of a tripartite conference as Tibet held no great interest for Russia.[99] Direct approaches to China and Tibet were made. The India Office suggested Darjeeling as a venue for the talks but the Indian Government had it changed to Simla, where they could exercise greater control over proceedings and where the Tibetan delegates would be less exposed to Chinese intrigues.[100]

China was warned about continuing her military campaign in Eastern Tibet ; however, a severe setback to her forces prevented this from developing into a contentious issue. But the status of the Chinese and Tibetan delegates, as had been the case on previous occasions, threatened to become a subject of serious dispute, particularly when a presidential order appeared in Peking appointing Ivan Chen and Hu Han Min Commissioners for the Pacification of Tibet. The Foreign Office insisted that the order be revoked, and as a result of their representations a fresh decree appointing Mr. Chen Chinese plenipotentiary was announced.[101] When it is remembered that Chinese power in Tibet had collapsed except in the marches, and that Lhasa earlier in the year (January 1913) had entered into independent treaty relations with Mongolia, the British attitude although firm was eminently fair. For while the Mongol-Tibet accord may have lacked validity consistent with the driest logic of international law, it clearly emphasised the will to political indepen-

dence ; the Dalai Lama's proclamation of January 1913 to his people being further evidence of the fact.[102]

From Beilby Alston, Jordan's deputy in Peking, came a call for bold and forthright action. In a note to Hardinge he remarked :

> Now that we have formally threatened them [Chinese] with direct negotiations with Tibet, we should, I think, be prepared with a means of carrying out this threat in such a way that the Chinese will realise that we are not bluffing. The idea of an agreement with us alone would probably not appeal to the Tibetans, unless it were accompanied by something more than a mere verbal assurance of support against Chinese retaliation on their Eastern Frontier. Would it not be possible to go so far as to lend them arms and ammunition and, say, a few reservists from Gorkha regiments to train their own native levies and to show them how to keep the passes ? ...The Russians have already done this, and more in Mongolia, and I think the stationing of a British Resident in Lhasa should also be kept in view as the coping stone to the edifice of peace which we are endeavouring to erect on your North-Eastern Frontier···I cannot too strongly urge my own conviction that our own action, and not Chinese assurances, or even written obligations, will be the only safe foundation on which to build.[103]

The threat to treat directly with the Tibetans was used to great effect by the British in Peking. The Simla Conference opened ceremonially on 6 October with the first negotiating session commencing on 13 October 1913. After such Chinese prevarication and delay, it was an achievement that the talks had got under way at all.

But even as the first tentative steps to Simla were being taken, Nicolson, whose mind by now was obsessed by the need to keep Russia's friendship, was apprehensive lest developments in India marred Anglo-Russian ties. As he nervously awaited Sazanof's proposals for a revision of the 1907 Convention concerning Persia, he anticipated more Russian activity in Mongolia and possibly an expression of Russian interest in Tibetan affairs. Nevertheless, he remarked to Hardinge, the British could meet their ally,

> half-way and not allow ourselves to be influenced by Anglo-

> Indian prejudices and traditions as would engender suspicions and misunderstandings between us and Russia. It is always to me a very great comfort to think that you are at the head of affairs in India as I am quite sure that if we had any other Viceroy we might find ourselves drifting towards a certain alienation from Russia.[104]

For the British team at Simla, caught between the conflicting needs of India, and the Home Government's overriding desire to accommodate Russia's every whim, the negotiations seemed set for a long and tortuous course. Their leader was Sir Henry McMahon among whose principal advisers were Charles Bell, Political Officer, Sikkim, and Archibald Rose of His Majesty's Chinese Consular Service. China was represented by Ivan Chen, and Tibet by Lonchen Paljor Dorje Shatra.

The first problem facing the Conference was an agreed definition of Tibet's territory. As expected this became an acutely contentious issue between the Chinese and Tibetan delegates, and led eventually to the breakdown of the talks. The immediate question was, however, to settle for an agreed procedure. The Government of India favoured a statement of Tibetan claims followed by an adjournment after which the Conference would re-convene to hear China's reply. The British delegation confronted by two widely divergent points of view could then get to work on a compromise plan. As this procedure did not appear to contravene the Home Government's view of Britain in the role of an honest broker no objection was evinced in London. However, Alston from Peking expressed his resevations about its wisdom.[105] He reminded the Foreign Office that the idea of an honest broker was Lord Morley's and that it had not been discussed with Peking. Indeed, China had been given to understand that the basis of the Simla negotiations would be the Jordan memorandum of 17 August 1912, and that the Tibetans were being made parties to it in order to ensure their adherence to any arrangement reached. Alston's suggested alternative was that Tibet should make known her requirements in the form of a commentary on the memorandum alluded to, and this could subsequently be used by Britain in preparing her own draft proposals.

India may have calculated that by giving publicity to the sweeping Tibetan claims it would be putting pressure on China to reach a reasonable settlement. If so, it reckoned wrongly, for the Chinese put forward extravagant counter-claims and ensured that the Conference by having to consider the case of either side, item by item, got bogged down in wearisome detail. Nothing so suited them than a situation of total stalemate. Alston seemed to have sensed this. In his view the only viable pressure to which Peking would prove amenable was a British threat to treat directly with Tibet. Had greater weight been attached to his opinions in London, Anglo-Tibetan relations might have run a more satisfactory course.

The Home Government's position was embodied in an India Office paper[106] which Crewe circulated to the Cabinet a few days after the Simla Conference had opened. The document emphasised Britain's role as an honest broker ; it disavowed any intention either to extend India's responsibilities or her frontiers, but merely sought to limit Chinese activity in certain areas of Tibet ; it pointed out that by recognizing the present Chinese regime on 8 October Britain had lost her remaining lever in Peking ; it emphasised that McMahon's bargaining hand was weakened even further by the restrictive provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention and that whatever gains he won would have been achieved by diplomatic persuasion. The paper refrained conspicuously from mentioning any threat to deal directly with Lhasa in the face of possible Chinese obduracy, but it did refer in general terms to the need to define the Indo-Tibetan border east of Bhutan. It was on the whole a weak and negative document, notable only for the scant encouragement it gave to British negotiators in Simla.

The Conference proceeded according to plan. The Tibetan delegation began by laying on the table the claims of their Government to territory which included the Kokonor district and extended eastwards to Tachienlu. They asserted the independence of Tibet and recounted the recent excesses of the Chinese.[107]

On 30 October the Chinese replied with a counterclaim by

which they asserted their sovereignty over Tibet, the right to station a Resident at Lhasa with an escort of 2,600 men, freedom to guide Tibet in its foreign and military affairs, and to a frontier between China proper and Tibet which went as far west as Giamda, within 260 miles of Lhasa.[108]

The problems facing McMahon were as follows: Tibet had repudiated Chinese suzerainty and the chances of re-establishing that suzerainty on the former basis were nil. The Tibet-Mongol agreement of January 1913 may have carried no weight in Europe but in Tibetan eyes it was an effective affirmation of their country's independence. McMahon's views were confirmed by Rose who observed that,

> unless we have someone at Lhasa to give advice and moral support to the de facto Government, there seems little hope that Tibet can work out her own salvation. This leaves us with two alternatives—a British representative or complete Chinese control. The Lonchen is a shrewd and capable man, the one man who really counts in Tibet, as they tell us, and he frankly admits that he is powerless against the conflicting factions in his own camp unless we stand by him..... One point which is new, and which will need careful consideration, is the determination of the Tibetans to open up their country: they are always thinking of and discussing communications, mines, and new sources of revenue: this will mean changes in administration, possibly foreign loans, and in view of the Russo-Mongolian agreements, the sterilisation of Tibet seems to be no longer possible.[109]

Thus a British representative at the Tibetan capital and direct relations with the Tibetan Government were the wisest course open to the British. The Home Government should press for the revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention concerning Tibet without delay. Furthermore, while China's right to post an Amban at Lhasa with a small escort of 300 men was recognised, no reference was made to her claim to advise Tibet on its foreign relations since this could have been interpreted to include Nepal and Bhutan. In conclusion, recent developments in Mongolia by possibly opening the back door to Tibet had underlined the impracticability of maintaining a political vacuum there. McMahon, therefore, aimed to provide for

British participation in industrial and commercial enterprises in Tibet. These then were the factors which determined his own draft proposals of 10 November 1913[111] which were despatched to London for consideration. Meanwhile, Sir Henry summoned a second meeting of the Conference on 18 November in order that a clear understanding should be reached between all three parties on the territorial limits of Tibet. Ivan Chen demurred at any procedure which did not first recognise China's suzerainty, and then accept the reinstatement of the Amban at Lhasa. Unable to get his way the Chinese diplomatist at the close of the meeting promptly 'took to his bed and has as yet shown no disposition to rise. I trust that our subsequent negotiations will not suffer from delays of this nature,'[112] concluded McMahon.

In Whitehall, Mongolian developments had become a fresh apple of discord. The Russo-Mongolian Protocol of 3 November 1912 as was recognised in the Foreign Office had virtually reduced Mongolia to a Russian protectorate, and not withstanding the storm of protest it initially provoked in China, Peking in return for a few face-saving clauses, eventually came round to endorsing its provisions under a Sino-Russian Agreement signed on 5 November 1913.[113]

The first reaction of the Foreign Office was to assure the Board of Trade in a departmental note that the British Chargé d'affaires at Peking had been instructed to get in touch with the Mongolian Government with a view to recognising their autonomy in exchange for an open door for British commerce.[114] The problems of India's frontiers could not obviously have had a totally paralyzing effect on Grey, for he managed to display unusual dash in pursuing the chimera of trade across the wastes of Mongolia ! The reasoning of the Foreign Office was that as Mongolia was on the same footing as the rest of China, Britain could negotiate directly with it since any change in its status was a matter of concern to all powers having treaty rights in the Chinese Empire. Any hopes the British may have had of gaining leverage in St. Petersburg by the use of this argument were finally dashed early in the following

year when Sazanof informed Buchanan that in Russian eyes Mongolia was not an integral part of China but merely a vassal.[115] Russia obviously was now strong and confident enough to ignore past assurances.

In the meantime Crewe, faced with a posse of rebellious advisers, decided to close ranks with Grey. He expressed agreement with the Foreign Secretary's view that it would be undesirable to complicate the Tibetan question by linking it with Mongolia and that it was premature to raise the matter with Sazanof. The pursuit of Mongolian trade was for the moment much the safer option.[116]

Having studied McMahon's draft of 10 November and the Government of India's suggested amendments,[117] the India Office in consultation with the Foreign Office produced one of its own early in December.[118] Hirtzel's accompanying minute is of particular interest.

> 'We have', he remarked, 'embodied in it as much as we could of the Government of India's recommendations, but our draft differs *essentially* from theirs in that theirs is based on the assumption that Russia will agree to a complete revision of the arrangement concerning Tibet without raising awkward questions elsewhere, and our draft is based on the assumption that she will not...This Office has always held—as the Government of India now hold—that revision should be pressed for if possible, but if the F.O. say that it is impossible, as they do, there is an end of it. A new consideration is this : if Russia did not ask for compensation in Persia and Afghanistan, almost the only place left is Chinese Turkestan. Now, apart from the fact that the Government of India themselves are unwilling to give compensation there, the F. O. have had a strong appeal from Sir John Jordan not to do so. In the light of these circumstances the present draft is the best possible one.'[119]

Only its Sixth Article which presented considerable difficulty called for detailed explanation. Under Article 3 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 China was given a monopoly of concessions in Tibet, and it was desirable that as Britain was freeing her own hands, to use the present opportunity of getting rid of this monopoly. There were two courses of action open to the British Government : first, they could place themselves

on the same footing as China ; in other words exercise a joint monopoly ; or secondly, they could cancel the article in question which would then have the effect of revising Article 9(d) of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904 by throwing Tibet open to foreign enterprise subject in each case to Britain's consent. This would mean that Tibet was to be opened to everyone except Britain and Russia. She would, for example, be within her rights to offer a concession to, say, Japan because neither Britain nor Russia were available. Public opinion in neither country would accept this. The choice between these two alternatives was complicated by Article 4 of the Anglo-Russian Convention under which the parties engaged not to obtain concessions in Tibet. This clause could only go with Russian consent, which was unlikely to be forthcoming. Another complication was that it would be morally impossible to sterilize Tibet against its will. The only way out of this impasse, suggested Hirtzel, would be the creation of spheres of commercial influence, the difficulty was agreement on an acceptable line. So little was known about Tibet that a fair division of commercial interest was impossible ; hence it would have to be based on political considerations, and the commercial consequences left to chance. Thus Britain should claim a sphere of 200 miles in breadth stretching along the whole northern frontier of India and its adjoining states, and leave the rest to Russia. If Russia objected that the settlement left Lhasa in the British Zone, Britain could reply that under a similar arrangement in Persia, Tehran had remained in the Russian sphere. There was, however, a third alternative. This would entail cancelling the Chinese Monopoly and modifying Article 4 of the Anglo-Russian Convention so that each party would be able to obtain concessions in Tibet, but only with the consent of the other. One disadvantage was that this could lead to unfriendly competition between Britain and Russia ; that permission for every venture meant that Russia would have to be approached cap in hand even if it were to involve British enterprise in the Chumbi Valley ; more objectionable was that it would expose vast areas of territory adjacent to the Indian frontier to Russian

influence. The Permanent Under-Secretary personally favoured the division of the country into spheres of commercial interest. His minute threw important light on the considerations which lay behind the formulation of Article 6 in the India Office draft.[120]

The Government of India responded with a sharp rejoinder. It deprecated the re-opening of the Persian and Chinese Turkestan questions and refused to consider the possibility of Russian commercial privileges in Tibet. It upheld in the main McMahon's draft of 10 November and emphasised the need to review the whole situation in the light of Russian moves in Mongolia ; furthermore, it stressed the necessity of having a British Agent at Lhasa as a safeguard against the possible intrigues of foreign powers (the ease with which Japanese disguised as Tibetans could enter the country was cited as an example) ; finally, it sought a way out of the current impasse by suggesting the substitution of Tibet for China in Article 3[121] of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, a proposal which would involve the partial sterilisation of Tibet...[122].

That Russian action in Mongolia entitled Britain to a *quid pro quo* in Tibet was a view with which Hirtzel had every sympathy. The stumbling block, however, was the Foreign Office who refused to approach Russia because Sazanof's remarks in September 1912, that the cases of Mongolia and Tibet were not analogous, ruled out any possibility of an agreement. In their opinion, nothing for the present should be done that could possibly cloud Anglo-Russian relations. Hirtzel observed that Sazanof's argument was sound only

> if Tibet and Mongolia stood in no kind of relation to one another : it falls to the ground when what is done in the one reacts on the other. How far Russian action in Mongolia was going to affect the situation in Tibet could not be foreseen in September 1912, and it was impossible then to counter Mr. Sazanof's argument.[123]

The series of agreements negotiated between Russia and Mongolia, Russia and China, and Mongolia and Tibet had since introduced new factors into the situation which entitled Britain

to demand a *quid pro quo*. To Sir Arthur, the case for pressing such a demand appeared unanswerable,

> and it leaves no excuse for re-opening the Persian and Afghan Agreements. I would, therefore, venture most strongly to urge H. M. G. at least to try it, before they acquiesce in any of the extraordinarily lame alternatives that alone are open.[124]

However, Hirtzel came down hard on Hardinge's proposal for the partial sterilisation of Tibet. The Viceroy's amendment to Article 3 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention, he argued correctly, by restricting the grant of commercial privileges to Tibetans only would in effect result in the total sterilisation of that country. Nor did Grey's advocacy of administrative sterilisation, as contained in the Foreign Secretary's amendment to Article 2 of the India Office draft, find favour in his eyes. He summed up his case thus :

> To my mind the administrative sterilisation of Tibet against her will is, no less than her commercial sterilisation, impolitic – because if she is determined to get outside assistance, she will succeed, whether we like it or no—and morally indefensible—for obvious reasons."[125]

As to India's attempt to press its case for a permanent British representative at Lhasa, the matter was now closed. Were the posting of an agent permitted the terms of the treaty under discussion could have been less stringent. The absence of such an agent, commented Hirtzel, made it all the more urgent for the British Government to ensure that paper safeguards were as effective as possible.

But while this vigorous debate between these two departments of state continued, and as the Indian and Home Governments were locked in verbal battle, the parties at Simla had set about defining Tibet's territorial limits. Ivan Chen relied on extracts from a pamphlet by General Fu Saung-mu recording the frontier campaigns of Chao Erh-feng, and on the published works of foreign authors, such as Sir Thomas Holdich, for documentary evidence of his country's case.

> 'The Lonchen, whilst expressing his interest in the opinions expressed by the authors, refused to accept as conclusive any

statements which lacked the weight of an official seal. In support of the Tibetan claim he produced a large number of original archives from Lhasa, tomes of delicate manuscripts bound in richly embroidered covers, he confronted his opponent also with the official history of Tibet, compiled by the 5th Dalai Lama and known as the "Golden tree of the Index of the sole ornament of the World", a work of great scope and colossal dimensions.

The Lonchen claimed recognition for the Chinese-Tibetan Treaty of 822 A. D., which was recorded on three identical pillars, one in the Ta-Chao-Ssu Monastery at Lhasa, one at the Chenese capital (Hsi-an-Fu), and one on the frontier at Marugong, on the Kokonor-Kansu border. The historical and traditional frontier of Tibet, as outlined in this Treaty, is the one indicated on the map attached to the Tibetan claim. He announced moreover that he would lay on the table the original records of each Tibetan State as far east as Tachienlu, proving that the lamasaries and tribal chiefs had exercised a continuing administrative control over the country for many centuries, and that they held their lands, collected their taxes and received their subsidies by virtue of their association with the Government at Lhasa.

For some days Mr. Chan showed evident signs of panic; he protested that his Government would never consent to the production of evidence in regard to the country east of Batang or the discusssion of Kokonor; he telegraphed to Paris for an official copy of the "Institute of the Manchu dynasty"; and he stated that he relied on China's position in international law, by which Chao-Erh-feng's effective occupation of the country cancelled any earlier Tibetan claim.'[126]

These three paragraphs from McMahon's Memorandum contrast strongly with Lamb's somewhat scornful attitude towards the Tibetan evidence.[127] On the other hand he tends to pay solemn regard to Chinese claims over Nepal and Bhutan, even when these were being pressed with the aid of such substantial proof as a decorative button or peacock's feathers awarded to local chiefs!

The Chinese certainly were not unmoved by the weight of the Tibetan evidence. Ivan Chen, the Chinese Plenipotentiary, a man well schooled in the principles and practice of Western diplomacy, who spoke English with fluency, would surely have not shown such 'evident signs of panic' (McMahon's phrase) had

the Tibetan documents been of 'dubious relevance'[128] The Chinese, in Lamb's words, 'became increasingly annoyed as, one suspects, Chinese diplomats became during the Sino-Indian boundary discussions of 1960-61, when the Indian side started quoting from Sanskrit epics.'[129]

Faced with a seemingly unbridgeable gulf between the two sides and perhaps inspired by the Russian model in Mongolia, McMahon put forward a compromise draft under which Tibet would be divided into two Zones. The Inner Zone, nearest China, was to include the March country, while the Outer Zone lying adjacent to India and comprising Central Tibet was to hold such important towns as Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse. Only the latter Zone was to have well defined rights of autonomy. The British Plenipotentiary urged his superiors to accept his plan on the ground of four main advantages which were as follows :

> Firstly, Thibetans and, indirectly, British interests in Inner Thibet would be safeguarded and perpetuated.
>
> Secondly, negotiations with both China and Thibet would be rendered easier
>
> Thirdly, the possibility that any part of Thibetan territory would in future be included within the still undefined frontiers of Outer and Inner Mongolia, would be avoided.
>
> Fourthly, creation of an effective Zone intervening between Russia, or other foreign sphere of influence, and Thibet would be facilitated.[130]

Hardinge endorsed the McMahon plan as did Crewe who, however, added the rider that Tibetan rights in the Inner Zone had to be carefully defined. Unless this were done the Chinese would lose no opportunity of ignoring the restrictions placed on their activities and thus provoke the Tibetans into making embarrassing appeals for British help.[131]

Nugent at the Foreign Office thought the zone proposed far too generous to China.

> It appears to me that, in practice, it is merely a "face" saving device to enable us and the Tibetans to give way to the Chinese pretensions on the boundary question . . whatever it may be in theory "Inner Tibet" will have to be handed

over bag and baggage to the Chinese and it doesn't seem that restrictions which however carefully defined in the Agreement...will serve to preserve the real autonomy of Outer Tibet...[moreover]—there are sure to be constant appeals from the Tibetan Government to us as their various claims and privileges in Inner Tibet are one by one ignored by the Chinese...after all it is the Chinese who are the immediate danger, and who have caused the present difficulties and it would be unwise in our anxiety to stave off future trouble with Russia to leave them an opportunity of reproducing the position of 1909-10.[132]

Nugent's colleague, Gregory, however thought better of the scheme which reconciled "the enormously conflicting territorial claims of China and Tibet and [created] a buffer State between Russianised Mongolia and Tibet proper (now to be called Outer Tibet). Inner Tibet would be only nominally Tibetan and China would have the satisfaction of treating it as really Chinese..."[133]

In Langley's view 'Our objects are to remove the Chinese to as great a distance as possible from Lhassa and Outer Tibet generally, and at the same time to interpose a buffer state under Chinese administration between Outer Tibet and Mongolia, so that Russian influence may not easily penetrate to the Tibetan capital. These objects [McMahon's] proposal appears to carry out."[134]

The form of the McMahon plan had much in common with Russia's Mongolian model ; otherwise the two bear little comparison. Korostovetz perhaps unwittingly revealed the strength of his government's position when he told Buchanan that 'Russia was precluded by her secret convention with Japan from allowing any portion of Inner Mongolia to be incorporated with Outer Mongolia.'[135] In other words, the whole Russian structure was underpinned by a treaty with Japan (the strongest power in the region) in which each recognised the other's sphere of influence. The Chinese on the other hand were not prepared to abide by such rules in Tibet. Herein lay the fundamental weakness of McMahon's proposed arrangement, as Nugent perceived so clearly.

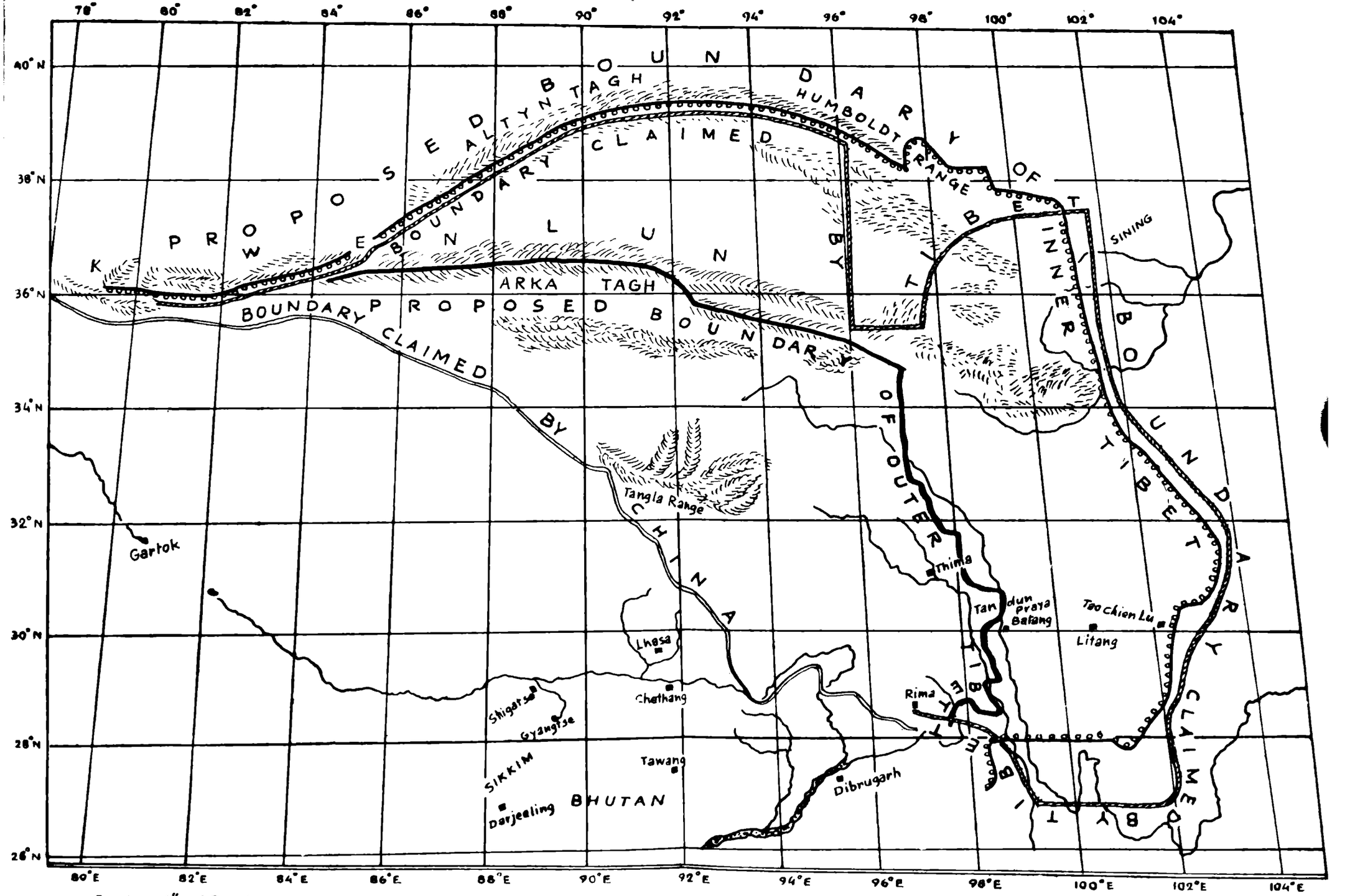
Having reconvened the Conference in the New Year following the Christmas recess, McMahon empowered by the

Home Government, placed his plan before the Chinese and Tibetan delegations on 17 February 1914 with an accompanying map. Clearly defined though the autonomy of Outer Tibet was, it reserved

> to China the right to re-establish such a measure of control in Inner Tibet as would restore and safeguard her historic position, without in any way infringing the integrity of Tibet as a geographical and political entity. I made it clear that indeed we were prepared to consider the Tibetan March country between Batang and Tachienlu as a buffer State, which would effectually safeguard the border provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan ; whilst the territory round the Lake of Kokonor, of which little was known by either of my Colleagues save that it was practically unadministered and was inhabited by bands of Mongol nomads, would play the same part in regard to Kansu and the new Dominion—but that we were determined to prevent the absorption of any part of Tibet.[136]

Later in the year Walter Langley was to say of McMahon after the latter's return to England : 'He was naturally not very sympathetic about China and it is no doubt difficult to convince any one from India that there is a Chinese point of view which deserves consideration.'[137]

The merit of this observation was at best questionable, for the 'Chinese point of view' received scant respect from Nugent, Gregory and Alston or Crowe, all trusted Foreign Office hands unafflicted by the supposed provincialism of Indian officialdom. Furthermore, McMahon's report underlined the principal advantages China stood to gain in Inner Tibet. For instance, she would be allowed to re-establish a measure of control in the Marches much of which she had lost in the continuing conflict with the Tibetans. The genuine needs of her security were accepted, hence the recognition of a buffer State safeguarding the provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan. Indeed, the British may have been prepared to be even more flexible in practice, for Rose defended the settlement in a conversation with Jordan in these words : '...that as China could do practically what she liked in Inner Tibet, it was immaterial whether the places were included in Inner Tibet or regarded as China.'[138]



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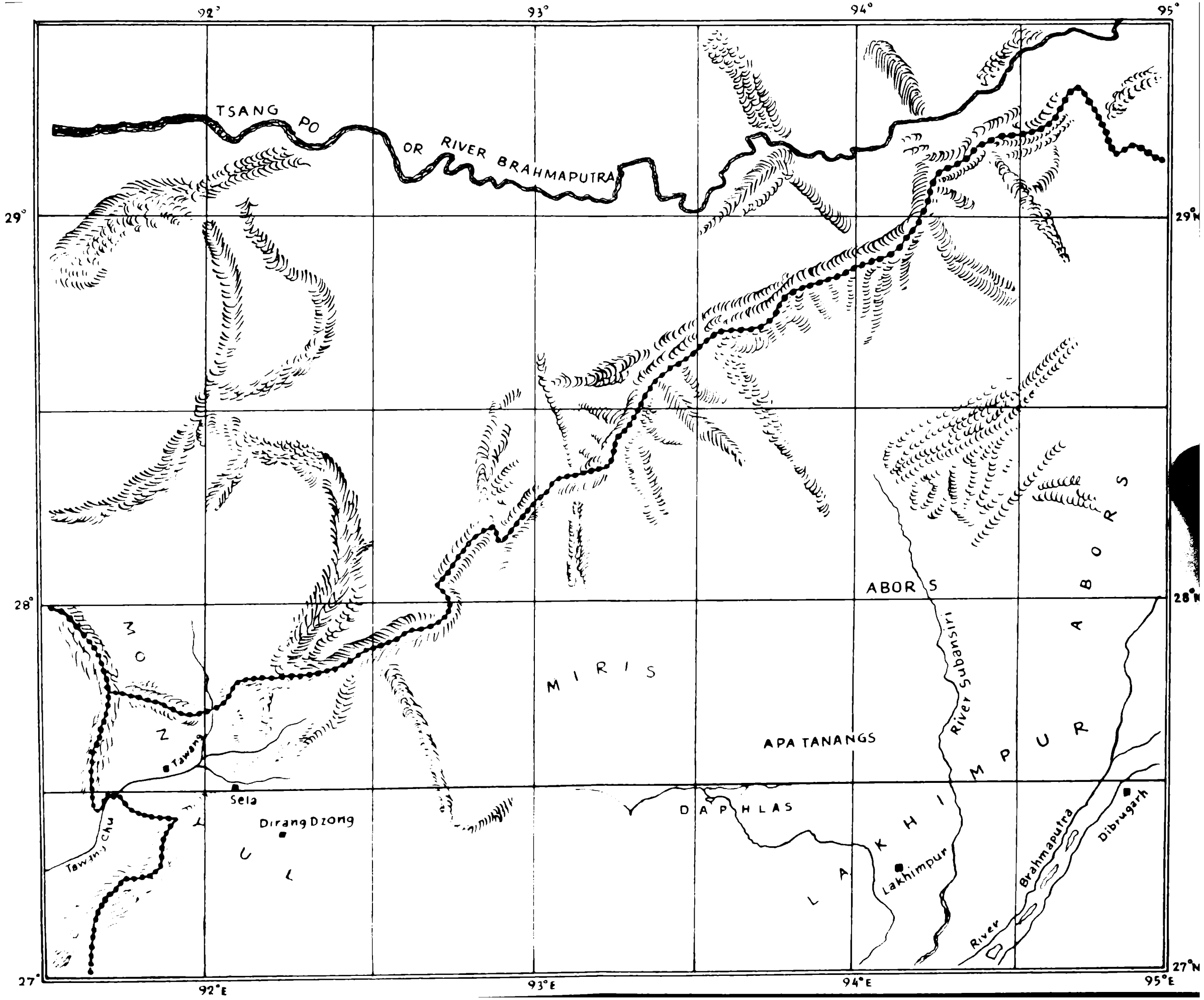
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Lakhimpur
River Brahmaputra
Dibrugarh

92° 93° 94° 95°

29° 29°N

TSANG PO OR RIVER BRAHMAPUTRA

MOZ

Tawang

Sela

Dirang Dzong

TULL

Tawang Chu

MIRIS

APA TANANGS

DAPHLAS

ABORS

River Subansiri

MPUR

ABO

AKHI

LA

Lakhimpur

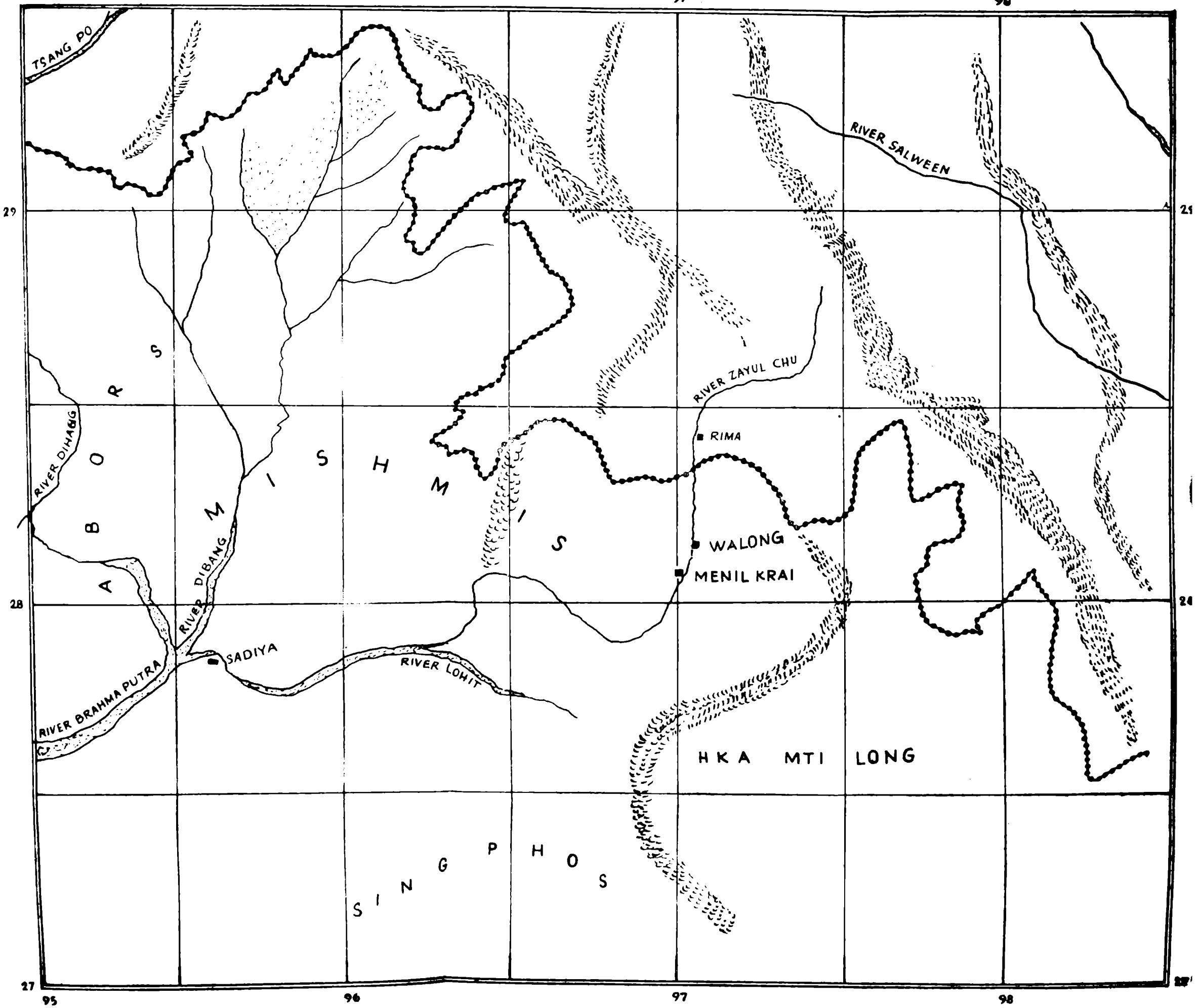
River Brahmaputra

Dibrugarh

28° 28°N

27° 27°N

92°E 93°E 94°E 95°E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TSANG PO
RIVER SALWEEN
RIVER ZAYUL CHU
RIVER DIHANG
RIVER DIBANG
RIVER BRAHMA PUTRA
RIVER LOHIT
SADIYA
RIMA
WALONG
MENIL KRAI
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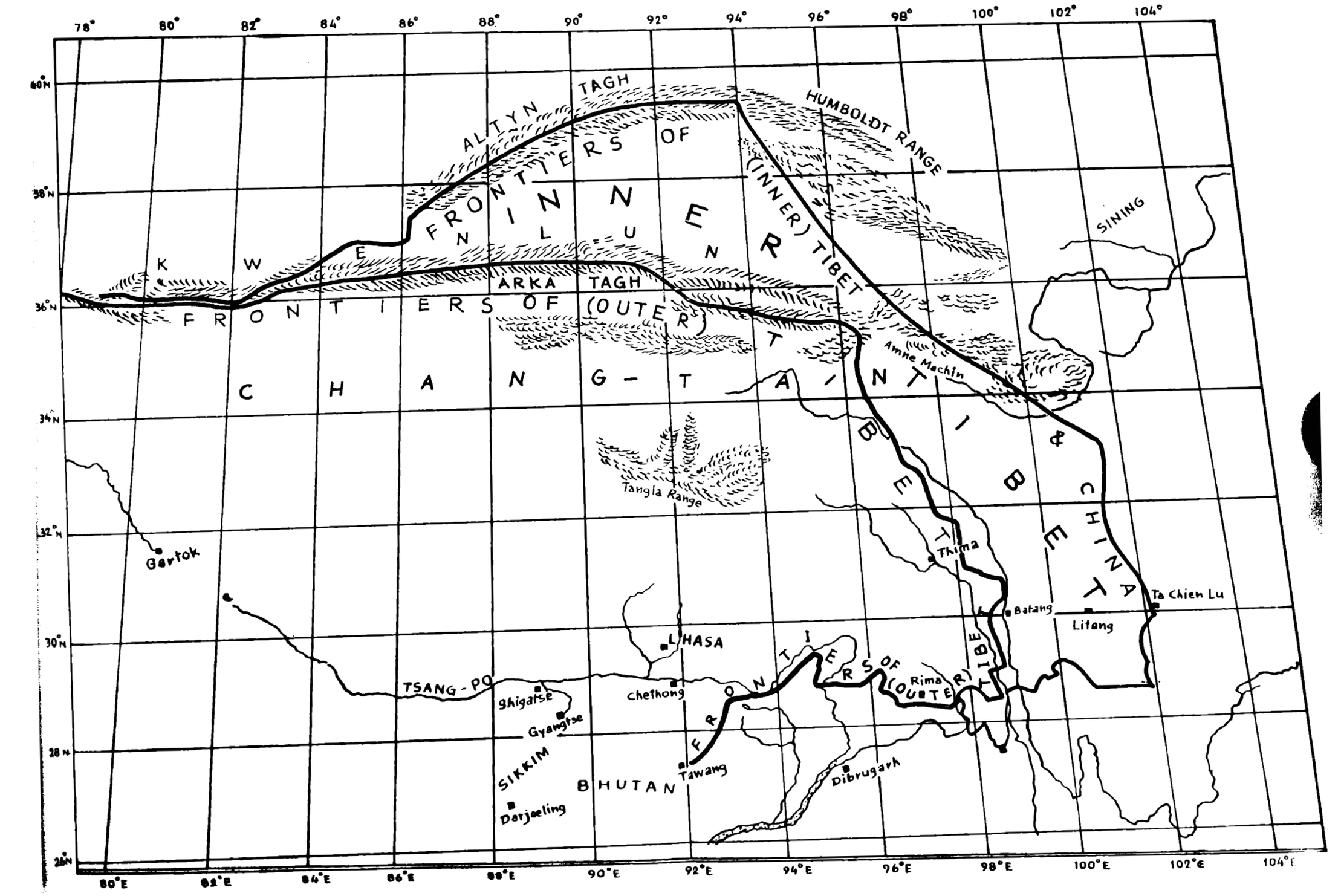

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Although the Tibetans did not react to McMahon's plan with noticeable joy—they demurred at the prospect of Chinese influence being consolidated in Inner Tibet, an area in which they claimed to have enjoyed undisputed authority—the Chinese rejected it out of hand, being 'prepared only to recognise a limited Tibetan autonomy in a loosely defined area, which appeared to consist of little more than the country in the immediate vicinity of Lhasa.'[139] The India Office draft Convention of 20 February 1914 incorporating the various points raised in the recent correspondence between India, the Home Government and the two departments of State at Whitehall,[140] had by now reached Simla and was submitted before the meeting of 11 March 1914. On 20 March Ivan Chen sent a message to the British rejecting the entire draft. All this while Lu Hsing Chi, the Chinese Agent in Calcutta, was telegraphing his Government, advising them to take a harder line on the plea that India was about to rise in revolt and the British would therefore be unable to hold out much longer. Unfortunately for him, his telegrams were intercepted by the Indian authorities and as such McMahon was fully aware of his intrigues.[141]

The time had now come to open a more direct channel of communication with Lhasa. The Lonchen Shatra and his British confre`res repaired to Delhi where they would be free from the unwelcome attention of prying foreigners, particularly the Japanese whose exceptional curiosity was arousing considerable suspicion and some alarm both in India and at Whitehall. With the Chinese obdurate, the Tibetan and British Plenipotentiaries got down to the business of defining a common boundary along the Assam Himalaya. Indeed, as early as November 1913 Hardinge had suggested that such a discussion should be restricted to territory east of Bhutan since Nepal and Bhutan had disputed boundaries with their northern neighbour.[142] The moment was opportune to make good the Viceroy's proposal. F. M. Bailey in company with Morshead had just completed the last of his remarkable explorations of the Tawang area, where he was able to trace the course of the Brahmaputra, the achievement deservedly earning him signal honours.[143]

Farther east O'Callaghan had perhaps led a less exciting venture but no less important for that and made available to the Government the result of his surveys. Summed up: 'The expeditions and explorations on the north-east frontier from 1910-14 provided a mass of new geographical and political material, on which it was possible to base the definition of a boundary between Tibet and Assam.'[144] McMahon's name was given to the line which it was agreed should define India's north-eastern frontier. In an exchange of letters between the two sides Tibet conceded the Tawang tract for British support of Tibetan territorial claims on the Chinese border.[145]

While it would be unwise to regard the McMahon Line as sacrosanct,[146] particularly as it was never demarcated on the ground, it was, subject to adjustments of a secondary nature, a frontier which was both fair, from an ethnic point of view, and strategically sound. The Tawang tract was absorbed principally for strategic reasons—which might have violated the letter of the Anglo-Russian Convention, but in the light of Russian activity in Northern China and Mongolia, the transgression was surely a minor one ; more so as the Russians by permitting their arms to pass from Mongolia into Tibet were already in breach of this accord.[147]

As a postscript to these events, one may profitably turn to a period during the Second World War when the Indo-Tibetan frontier had become an issue of some contention between Lhasa and New Delhi. Sir Basil Gould, one of the Government of India's principal advisers on Tibet, suggested then that the McMahon Line be modified by the cession of territory north of the Se-La (pass) as part of a *quid pro quo* which would involve unconditional Tibetan recognition of Tawang's incorporation into British India. He had found that in Tibetan eyes the initial transfer of this tract in 1914 was made only on the understanding the British would help rid them of the Chinese and win international recognition of their country's sovereignty. As this never materialised, Tawang, in their view, reverted to its former state ; thus when Captain Lightfoot with an accompanying escort from the Assam Rifles visited the area in the summer

of 1938, he discovered a Tibetan administrative presence which he proceeded, amid vigorous protest, to expel.

It is difficult to believe that the Tibetans, who had conducted themselves so shrewdly at the Simla Conference, would have ceded such a large and valuable piece of territory for no positive return.

Meanwhile, the Chinese, unaware of the agreement concluded secretly between McMahon and Lonchen Shatra, showed no inclination when negotiations resumed, to move from their previous rejection of the British draft Convention. However, the threat of a separate deal between Britain and Tibet forced Ivan Chen to think again and much against his inclinations he proceeded to initial the document on 27 April 1914. The British had made one last concession : the neighbourhood of Lake Kokonor was excluded from Inner Tibet and included in China Proper, whilst the prohibition against Tibetan representation in the Chinese National Assembly was confined only to the inhabitants of Outer Tibet. However, on the morning of 29 April Chen called on McMahon to inform him that Peking had repudiated his action. Although the Chinese Government refused to sign the Convention, the Tripartite talks had not broken down, as China still maintained an interest in reaching a solution satisfactory to herself.

However, the problem facing the British was to get Russia's formal approval to the Agreement and, even more pressing, persuade her to consent to the modification of the 1907 Convention. For with their diplomatic flank to St. Petersburg secure they would then be able to set about the task of getting a recalcitrant China to sign the Simla treaty.

The Foreign Offiec sent R. T. Nugent, already well briefed on the Tibetan question, to St. Petersburg to help Buchanan in his discussions with Sazanof. The Russian Foreign Minister's asking price was high. First, Article 10[148] had to be modified, for in its present form it seemed to make Britain the arbiter of Tibet's destiny. Second, apropos of Article 6[149] : the British and Russian Governments would engage by an exchange of notes, to be published simultaneously with the Convention, that

they would not ask for concessions for their respective subjects without prior understanding. In return Russia, in a secret note, would undertake not to ask for concessions for Russian subjects; nor would she oppose any request for concessions in favour of British subjects that might be addressed to them by His Majesty's Government. Third, Britain had to undertake, by an exchange of notes to be published, that she would not put Article 8[150] into effect without the previous agreement of the Russian Government. Russia, on her part, would bind herself through a secret note, not to oppose the visits of the British commercial agent at Gyantse to Lhasa whenever these were considered necessary. The official in question, however, had to retain his commercial character and not become a political agent.

As a counter-concession, the Russian Foreign Minister demanded that Britain in a formal note state that 'His Majesty's Government engage not to support any demand on the part of British subjects for irrigation works, railways, or any preferential rights for commercial and industrial enterprises in Northern Afghanistan.'[183] He also hinted darkly that he might have to approach the Foreign Office with a request to recognise more fully Russia's predominant interests in Northern Persia.

Unlike his deputy Neratof, whom Buchanan had seen a few days before, Sazanof proved on the whole to be hard and unsympathetic. He merely re-stated his government's traditional position that no valid comparison existed between the cases of Outer Mongolia and Tibet, vigorously contesting the British claim that the former had been reduced to a Russian protectorate in all but name and that as a result a fundamentally new element had entered the Tibetan situation. In Sazanof's view it was a pity that Tibet had ever been included in the 1907 agreement; but as this was now a *fait accompli* he was forced to insist on a *quid pro quo* for any possible revision of British treaty rights concerning that country. Failure to do so on his part would provide valuable ammunition for domestic opponents, eagerly scenting a possible sell-out of Russian interests. The

deal he proposed entailed British recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in Northern Afghanistan including, possibly, the right of a native Russian agent to visit Herat. This plainly was unacceptable, but Buchanan not surprisingly felt hurt at the unaccommodating spirit of a supposed ally and friend.

The Government of India balked at the idea of altering Article 10 since in their view any change in the text of the Convention would present the Chinese with an opportunity of re-opening the discussion on issues of substance. They did, however, accept Russia's proposals concerning Articles 6 and 8 involving an exchange of public and secret notes between the British and Russian Governments. Nor did Hardinge object to the idea of formally addressing Russia on Northern Afghanistan on the lines suggested by Sazanof; his only apprehension was that the Amir might choose to misinterpret it. He was therefore in favour of keeping the projected note secret until such time as India could explain its significance to the Afghan ruler and remove from his mind any qualms that his country was being partitioned behind his back.[152]

The India Office shared these views. Hirtzel in a minute[153] remarked that the publication of this note might incense Muslim feeling in India, and also that as an insurance against possible future misunderstanding, Russia should explicitly re-affirm that Afghanistan lay outside her sphere of influence. This last point found particular favour with India which in a further expression of its views deprecated any attempt to define Northern Afghanistan, as such an undertaking would arouse the Amir's suspicions.

Meanwhile Grey had intervened in the debate. He agreed to modify Article 10 and accepted Russia's proposals concerning Articles 6 and 8. The Russians hoped that the arrangement outlined by them would be completed before Britain proceeded to full signature of the Simla Convention, but as time was of the utmost essence they agreed to keep these in abeyance provided the British kept the text of the Convention secret.[154]

The Russians then proceeded to ruffle a few British feathers by insisting that both the definition of Northern Afghanistan and Britain's undertaking concerning it had to be made public,

and that Russian Buddhist pilgrims be allowed to travel to Tibet through India.[155] Nugent commented tartly: 'M. Sazanof is behaving very badly, he makes proposals and, as soon as they are agreed to, raises fresh demands.'[156]

He complained in a more elaborate minute that the Russians insisted upon the publication of everything which suited them while keeping secret their own concessions to Britain. Public opinion in each nation would thus be apt to draw a wholly one-sided conclusion of the deal.

> 'M. Sazanoff', continued Nugent, 'apparently both misunderstands and underrates the quality and character of criticism to be anticipated in this country. It is not a question of meeting irresponsible and more or less obscure opponents but of prominent ex-administrators and ministers, such as Lord Curzon, who are popularly regarded as among the greatest authorities on the subject and whose criticisms would have a marked effect on public opinion.. men who might conceivably in the future, be responsible for carrying out the undertaking which might now be given, and whose criticisms it would be consequently be difficult if not impossible to brush aside without serious discussion. In such a discussion our case, on paper, is extraordinarily weak, we have given much, and, apparently, received nothing.'[157]

There for the moment the matter was to rest, overtaken as it was by the darkening shadow of a European conflict which began to loom in the wake of a fresh Balkan crisis. It was in a sense fitting that the concluding gestures of the Tsarist ministers, bereft of magnanimity or understanding, should ring down the curtain on an epoch of Anglo-Russian diplomacy in Central Asia.

Having rejected the draft Convention of 27 April 1914 the Chinese Government were quick to follow this up by hinting to Jordan that should his Government prove unyielding it might be moved to retaliate against the sizeable British commercial interests in the Yangtse Valley, a threat to which the Ambassador was at all times sensitive. China's objections were for the moment confined to the boundary clause (Article 9) dividing Tibet from China Proper which, according to her leaders, had been grossly unfair to their country. They pressed for

negotiations to be resumed either at London or Peking reasoning, like their predecessors in 1905, that negotiations with Britain could be more rewarding if conducted oceans away from the baleful influence of Indian officialdom. It was also in their interest not to close the door to further talks since such action could irretrievably commit Britain to treating exclusively with Tibet.

Crewe, at the end of his tether, was not particularly impressed by such tactics. 'The Chinese proceedings over Tibet, and their repudiation of their representative's signature, seem to be very much á la Chinoise', he remarked. 'I suppose after long experience of them one learns what is the proper blend of cajolery and brutality required in order to get anything done, unless one goes mad in the process of acquiring this knowledge'.[158]

Nugent and Alston were in favour of dealing independently with Tibet and in this they were joined by the officials of the India Office. Lining up behind them were Hardinge and his advisers. The British Ambassador in Peking, however, thought otherwise ; he was more concerned on how such an attitude would react on the Anglo-Chinese negotiations on railway and mining concessions. The Viceroy quite clearly did 'not agree with Jordan's view that, by showing weakness to the Chinese, we have a better chance of getting mining and railway concessions. The experience of the Russians is just the reverse. They have bullied the Chinese over Mongolia, and they are getting all the railway concessions they want from them.'[159] The Tibetans for their part informed McMahon that they were not prepared to retreat from their current position.

Grey and Nicolson were prevailed upon to send an extremely stiff note to China in early June threatening to establish direct relations with Lhasa unless Peking was more amenable to reason. It turned out to be a piece of bluff, for Grey characteristically refused to back up the warning with effective action. The prospect of offending Russia exercised its usual paralyzing effect on both him and Nicolson.

Caught within these conflicting currents McMahon arrived

at the most sensible compromise: in company with the Tibetan Plenipotentiary he merely initialled the final draft. But in order to keep faith with the Tibetans, particularly with Lonchen Shatra, who had reposed their trust in the British, McMahon included a secret Anglo-Tibetan Declaration which affirmed that the provisions of the treaty would be observed by the two Government's in their mutual relations.[160]

If British conduct was devious then such deviousness has to be set against the formidable difficulties of negotiating with the Chinese. Neither in her attitude nor in her demands did China once display a degree of moderation that might have shown British fears in India to be groundless. Not content with the free hand Morley allowed her in Tibet, she was soon reaching out for territory and influence in the southern reaches of the Himalayas. And to each British attempt to reach a reasonable accommodation successive Chinese Governments responded with endless procrastination and prevarication. Had they been concerned primarily with the needs of security they could have obtained a good line of defence in the Tibetan marches. Jordan's belief, though firmly held, that territorial concessions in that area would have won Peking's assent to the rest of the Simla Convention, was backed by little or no evidence. Indeed, the British Ambassador went so far as to say that the concession need have extended no further than the region of Southern Kokonor.[161] The facts of the case do not warrant such a conclusion. China was primarily interested in her rights in Tibet and less concerned with defining the limits of Tibetan territory, as Ivan Chen made clear during the opening phase of the negotiations in November 1913.

Furthermore, even if the British had been so inclined they could not have made the concessions desired by the Chinese without jeopardising their considerably more important relationship with the Tibetans, who had ceded territory along the Assam Himalaya, presumably on the understanding that they would be supported in their demands on the Chinese frontier.

In the absence of either the full signatures of the Plenipotentiaries or of ratification by their Governments the decisions of

the Simla Conference may have little standing in International Law. The question of Tibetan independence, however, gives rise to greater doubt. A. P. Rubin argues against Tibetan claims to sovereign status.[162] However, as the basis of his case revolves around the concept of Chinese suzerainty, it is anything but a cast-iron one.

Part-sovereign states (itself a contradictory term), as Tibet juridically seems to have been, are difficult to classify. Their "domestic rulers find themselves limited and conditioned in dealing with external affairs by the rights of control vested in the government of an external power."[163] Some are described as protectorates, others as being under suzerainty. The extent of control exercised by a foreign power over each such state can be explained only by the circumstances of its origin. In course of time some became independent, some extinct through merger or annexation by the controlling power.

The intrinsic vagueness of the above terms render them, in Lawrence's view, 'unfit for purposes of scientific classification',[164] hence he prefers to call them client states, whose patrons act on behalf of them in the manner defined by long-continued custom or by the terms of some formal agreement, or by both.

Countries in a position broadly similar to Tibet's had in the past proceeded to full independence. Bulgaria, for example, was placed under Turkish suzerainty from 1878 to 1908. But it set at naught the authority of its suzerain, behaved in an independent manner both internally and externally, before proclaiming its independence in 1908.[165]

Turkey's suzerainty over Rumania and Serbia from 1856 to 1878 was equally shadowy. In 1878, the independence of both was recognised by the Treaty of Berlin.[166] Also notable was the case of Egypt, where the Khedive exercised almost absolute sovereignty and possessed the power to conclude formal agreements with foreign Powers, so long as they did not infringe the political treaties of the Porte.

The statement in the exchange of notes attached to the Simla Convention that : 'It is understood by the High Contracting

Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory',[167] should not inhibit one from recognising the reality of Tibetan independence, for a similar clause was included in the Treaty of Kiakhta of Jun 7, 1915, concerning Outer Mongolia.[168] In the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1924 the U. S. S. R. re-affirmed the formal status of Outer Mongolia as an integral part of China. Yet, only twelve years later in the interests of its border security in the Amur-Ussuri region against the menace of Japanese aggression, it 'entered into an agreement with the Mongolian People's Republic, under which title Outer Mongolia had been exercising its autonomy, providing for mutual support in the event of an attack by any third party.'[169] In 1945 after a plebiscite Outer Mongolia's status as a fully sovereign member of the international community was formalised.

It is beyond dispute that Tibet was a nation with a distinct cultural, ethnic and administrative identity. It possessed a government which exercised effective control over a settled portion of territory, and whose leaders conducted their country's foreign relations as would those of an independent power. Lonchen Shatra attended the Simla Conference as a Plenipotentiary, not as a member of the Chinese delegation. Any picture of a Tibetan unable to hold his own in the maze of modern diplomatic negotiations and turning constantly to McMahon for help bore little resemblance to reality. McMahon himself saw things differently. 'It is difficult,' he remarked, 'to do adequate justice to the personality of my Tibetan Colleague Lonchen Shatra...He combines a simplicity and charm of manner with an unexpected knowledge of men and affairs. He has impressed me throughout the negotiations as a man of very great shrewdness and capability, and despite his want of the diplomatic training in Western countries which his Chinese Colleague has enjoyed, proved quite his match in debate and political acumen.'[170] And Hardinge whose diplomatic experience was second to none observed: 'It is curious to find that the Tibetan representative is very much cleverer than the Chinaman in spite of the fact that the latter talks English fluently and was ten years in London.'[171]

The last word on the subject belongs, perhaps, to an anonymous prophet writing in the *Pioneer Mail*. 'In coming to some satisfactory settlement of the Tibetan question,' he remarked,

> We might well bear in mind that at present everybody in Asia is engaged in a game of grab—even the chief victim, and if in the future any one who has suffered from this policy is in a position to retaliate, he is likely to do so without discrimination. This being so it would be wise to make our Indian frontier as secure as possible now, before the storm comes, and for that reason Great Britain can never afford to see China take Tibet...it would be of great advantage to us to place a friendly and possibly a formidable buffer state between the two empires, since it is the Tibetan plateau not the Himalayas, which forms the real northern frontier of India. That is to say, we should uphold the status quo as it was a year after the revolution and if China does not agree, fight her for the possession of Tibet since it would be easier to wage an aggressive war now than it will be to carry on a defensive one ten or fifteen years hence...Mongolia has virtually perished—Tibet follows unless Great Britain signs her charter of freedom ; and it requires no foresight to see what that implies. It will be the cheapest way in the end.[155]

Notes to Chapter V

1. J. Morley, *Recollections*, Volume 2, London, 1917, p. 311. See also Curzon Papers, F112/16, Morley to Curzon, 4 November 1909.
2. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/340, Chirol to Nicolson, 27 October, 1907.
3. Morley Papers, D 573/2, Morley to Minto, 3 October, 1907.
4. Discussing the question of a successor to Arthur Godley on the eve of his retirement as Permanent Under Secretary at the India Office, Morley ascribed the lack of an obvious successor to the general dearth of outstanding talent in the Civil Service : 'in the F. O. there was no one : even Hardinge was not a first class mind.' 864/3, F. A. Hirtzel's Diary, 2 January, 1908.

5. C. Hardinge, *My Indian Years*, 1910-16, London, 1948, p. 6.
6. T. Holdich, *Tibet, The Mysterious*, London, 1908, p. 219.
7. L/PS/20/H 115, Notes on the Indian Frontiers, 1912, p. 26.
8. L/PS/18/B 180, North-Eastern Frontier of India, J. E. S. Shuckburgh, 1910. Between 1848-93 there were five expeditions against the Abors alone. See L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah and North-Eastern Frontier*, London, 1914, p. 128.
9. L/PS/7/154, No. 798, Note on Trade Routes between India and Tibet W. F. O'Connor, 13 April, 1903.
10. R. Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*, Shillong, 1942, p. 181.
11. Ibid, p. 212.
12. L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah and North-Eastern Frontier*, London, 1914, pp. 139-40.
13. For a survey of Chinese activity in the Himalayas, see L/PS/18/B177, Chinese "Forward" Policy on the North-Eastern Frontier of India, J. E. Shukburgh, 2 November, 1910.
14. L/PS/7/241, No. 1093, Assam to India, 26 May, 1910.
15. FO 535/13, Enclosure in No. 176, Minto to Morley, 23 October, 1910.
16. FO 535/14, Enclosure 7 in No. 51, Hardinge to Crewe, 22 December, 1910.
17. FO 535/14, Enclosure 2 in No. 51. Hare to Hardinge, 25 April, 1911.
18. FO 800/348, Nicolson Papers, Hardinge to Nicolson, 9 June, 1911.
19. Operations against Abors, Cd. Paper 5961 of 1911, Volume 55, No. 13, Hardinge to Crewe, 29 June, 1911.
20. Operations Against the Abors, Cd. Paper 5961 of 1911, Volume 55, No. 19, Hardinge to Crewe, 21 September, 1911.
21. For a record of this journey, see F. M. Bailey, *China-Tibet-Assam*, London, 1945.

22. Details of Chinese activity were contained in L/PS/18/B 189 entitled, Chinese Activity on the Mishmi Border, by J. E. S., 9 September, 1912.
23. A. H. McMahon, "International Boundaries", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts.* Volume 84, 1935, London, p. 3.
24. Curzon Papers F112/18, Hardinge to Curzon, 11 January, 1911.
25. FO 535/14, No. 87, Foreign Office to India Office, 26 October, 1911.
26. L/PS/20/D174, Report on the Chinese Frontiers of India, by A. Rose, 30 September, 1911, p. 1.
27. FO 535/14, No. 4, Buchanan to Grey, 14 January, 1911.
28. FO 535/14, No. 6, Buchanan to Grey, 17 January, 1911.
29. The British Ambassador drew Grey's attention to a similar pronouncement made publicly by Younghusband. Ibid.
30. FO 535/14, Enclosure 3 in No. 46, Bell to India, 29 March, 1911.
31. C. A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, pp. 116-121.
32. L/PS/10/180, Enclosure 3, No. 1918, Bell to India, 20 August, 1910.
33. Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840—1928*, London, 1956, pp. 200-435. An official contemporary Chinese interpretation of this upheaval is contained in Wu Yu-Chang, *The Revolution of 1911*, Peking, 1963, pp. 3-144.
34. FO 535/15, No. 9, Foreign Office to India Office, 13 January, 1912.
35. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 44, Hardinge to Crewe, 23 March, 1912.
36. FO 535/15, No 48, Foreign Office to India Office, 11 April, 1912
37. FO 535/15, No. 50, Jordan to Grey, 12 April, 1912.
38. Article 2 : 'The Sovereign of the Mongolian people Je-tsun Dampa approves and acknowledges the formation

of an Independent State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as Sovereign of Tibet.'

Article 4 : 'Both States, Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall henceforth, for all time, afford each other aid against dangers from without and within.' See C. A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, Oxford, 1924, p. 304.

39. L/PS/10/225, No. 151, Buchanan to Grey, 29 December, 1911.
40. Ibid, No. 419, Buchanan to Grey, 11 January, 1912.
41. G. M. Fritters, *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, London, 1950, p. 56. This book contains an excellent survey of Russo-Mongol and Sino-Mongol relations for the period. pp. 1-216.
42. Ibid, p. 151.
43. FO 535/15, No. 53, Jordan to Grey, 31 March, 1912.
44. Ibid, No. 67, Enclosures 283, Jordan to Grey, 27 April, 1912.
45. L/PS/10/B204, W. F. O'Connor, Note on Tibetan Affairs, 17 April, 1912.
46. Minto Papers, 4E 360, Butler to Minto, 13 May, 1912.
47. FO/535/15, Enclosure in No. 95, Hardinge to Crewe, 8 June, 1912.
48. Ibid, Enclosure 1 in No. 98, Crewe to Hardinge, 10 June, 1912.
49. Nicolson Papers, F 800/357, Hardinge to Nicolson, 27 June, 1912.
50. Ibid, Nicolson to Hardinge, 18 July, 1912.
51. Crewe Papers, Box I/6. File No. 14, Morley to Crewe, 10 June, 1912.
52. FO 371/1317, No. 15375, Unsigned Comment by Foreign Office official, 12 April, 1912.
53. Hardinge Papers, Volume 70, No. 156, Chirol to Hardinge, 14 June, 1912.
54. Ibid, No. 183, Chirol to Hardinge, 28 June, 1912.
55. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/352, Nicolson to Stamfordham, 7 December, 1912.

56. FO 535/15, Enclosure in No. 150, Memorandum of Interview on 23rd June, 1912.
57. FO 535/15, No. 176, Jordan to Grey, 16 August, 1912.
58. Ibid, Enclosure 2 in No. 151, Memorandum respecting Chinese Policy in Thibet. No date. Probably in June 1912.
59. L/PS/10/111, Enclosures in No. 3057a. 18 July, 1912.
60. FO 535/15, Enclosure in No. 30, Hardinge to Crewe, 7 March, 1912.
61. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 35, Crewe to Hardinge, 14 March, 1912.
62. L/PS/10/180, No. 3908, Minute by Sir A. Hirtzel, 21 July, 1911.
63. L/PS/10/181, Enclosure F in No. 3057a, Note on North-East Frontier by Chief of General Staff. 1 June, 1912.
64. FO 535/15, Enclosure in No. 57, Hardinge to Crewe, 29 April, 1912.
65. Ibid, No. 102, India Office to Foreign Office, 13 June, 1912.
66. Ibid, No. 152, India Office to Foreign Office, 11 July, 1912.
67. Ibid, Enclosure in No. 193, Jordan to Wai-chiao Pu, 17 August, 1912.
68. Jordan Papers, FO 350/8, Jordan to Langley, 16 August, 1912.
69. FO 535/15, Enclosure in No. 177, Hardinge to Crewe, 27 July, 1912.
70. F. O. 535/15, No. 177, India Office to Foreign Office, 15 August 1912.
71. Ibid, enclosure in No. 177, Memorandum respecting the situation in the countries bordering on the North-East frontier of India. 26 August/2 September, 1912.
72. W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, U. S. A., 1967, pp. 244-45.
73. FO 535/15, Enclosure 2 in No. 295, Bell to India, 10 November, 1912.
74. Ibid, No. 288, Jordan to Grey, 4 November, 1912.

75. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/358, Nicolson to Hardinge, 9 October, 1912.
76. Ibid, FO 800/359, Nicolson to Hardinge, 19 September, 1912.
77. Jordan Papers, FO 350/1, Langley to Jordan, 28 December, 1912.
78. Hardinge Papers Volume 118, Crewe to Hardinge, 3 October, 1912.
79. FO 535/15, No, 246, Grey to Macdonald, 10 October, 1912.
80. L/PS/10/225, No. 532, contains text of the Agreement.
81. Ibid, No. 4978, Jordan to Grey, 20 November, 1912.
82. L/PS/10/225, No. 4768, Grey to Jordan, 21 November, 1912.
83. L/PS/10/225, No. 4768, Grey to Jordan, 21 November, 1912.
84. FO 535/15, No. 296, India Office, to Foreign Office, 3 December, 1912.
85. These comments are to be found in FO 371/1329, No. 51749.
86. FO 535/51, No. 311, Foreign Office, 21 December, 1912.
87. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/361, Hardinge to Nicolson, 19 December, 1912.
88. Jordan Papers, FO 350/11, Langley to Jordan, 10 January, 1913.
89. FO 371/1609, No. 2534, Hardinge to Crewe, 16 January, 1913.
90. L/PS/18/B191, Tibet, by A. H. Hirtzel, 27 January, 1913.
91. Zara Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, 1977, pp. 182-83.
92. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/365 Buchanan to Nicolson, 20 March, 1913.
93. Grey Papers, FO 800/74, Memorandum by Sir G. Buchanan on Anglo-Russian Relations, 19 may, 1913.
94. Jordan Papers, FO 350/11, Langley to Jordan, 26 March, 1913.

95. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/367, Hardinge to Nicolson, 16 May, 1913.
96. Hardinge Papers, Volume 93, Hardinge to Chirol, 15 April, 1913.
97. Ibid, Volume 93, Jordan to Hardinge, 10 April, 1973.
98. FO 371/1610, No. 16537, Foreign Office to India Office, 30 April, 1913. 'You appear to me, if I may venture to say so, to think that you can arrange a satisfactory settlement without accepting any responsibility.' Alston Papers, FO 800/246, Jordan to Langley, 6 April, 1913.
99. FO 371/1611, No. 25215, O'Beirne to Grey, 29 May, 1913.
100. Ibid, No. 27640, Hardinge to Crewe, 16 June 1913.
101. Ibid, No. 28355, Alston to Langley, 21 June, 1913.
102. W. D. Shagakpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, U.S.A pp. 246-48.
103. Hardinge Papers, Volume 93, Alston to Hardinge, 29 August, 1913.
104. Nicolson Papers, FO 800/367, Nicolson to Hardinge, 2 July, 1913.
105. FO 535/16, No. 376, Alston to Langley, 9 October, 1913.
106. L/PS/18/B201, Tibet : The Simla Conference, 17 October, 1913, J. E. S. [Shuckburgh]
107. FO 525/16, Enclosure in No. 382, Hardinge to Crewe, 13 October, 1913.
108. FO 535/16, Enclosure in 410, Hardinge to Crewe, 31 October, 1913.
109. L/PS/10/344, 3160, Enclosure 1, Sir Henry McMahon's final Memorandum on the Tibet Conference. Hereafter, this will be referred to as McMahon's fiinal Memorandum.
110. Langley Papers. FO 800/30, Rose to Jordan, 17 November, 1913.
111. FO 535/16, Appendix to No. 461, Papers Communicated by India Office, 11 December, 1913.
112. McMahon's final Memorandum, Enclosure 1, 20 November, 1913.

113. A. K. Wu, *China and the Soviet Union*, London, 1950, pp. 41-46.
114. L/PS/10/365, No. 4614a, Foreign Office to Board of Trade, 7 November, 1913.
115. Ibid, No. 2374, Buchanan to Grey, 4 March, 1914.
116. Ibid, No. 4614a, India Office to Foreign Office, 19 November 1913.
117. FO 535/16, Enclosure No. 472, Hardinge to Crewe, 25 November, 1913.
118. Ibid, Enclosure 1 in No. 473, 2 December, 1913.
119. L/PS/10/342, 4619, Minute by A. Hirtzel, 3 December, 1913.
120. Article 6 of the India Office draft of 23 December 1913. reads as follows : 'Article 3 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article 9 (d) of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904 the term "foreign Power" does not include China.
Not less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.
No rights of monopoly as regards commerce or industry shall be granted to any official or private companies, institutions, or individuals in Thibet.'
121. The relevant part of Article 3 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 27 April 1906 was follows : "The concessions which are mentioned in Article 9 (d) of the Convention concluded on 7th September, 1904, by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any state or the subject of any state other than China..."
122. FO 535/16, Enclosure in No. 474, Hardinge to Crewe, 11 December, 1913.
123. L/PS/10/342, 5018, Minute by A. Hirtzel, 12 December, 1913.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. McMahon's Final Memorandum, Enclosure 2, 24 December, 1913.

127. A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, Volume 2, London, 1966, p. 481.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid. This could only have been to embellish a point; nevertheless these last remarks hinting at the absurd provide an interesting contrast with the author's observations in another book. There, he says, "The Indians...have used their history in a way which Western scholars can understand and relish...the Chinese have said that one of the major causes of the present crisis in Sino-Indian relations has been Prime Minister Nehru's co-operation with the capitalist Tata family in creating a war scare so as to increase arms production, and hence, to augment Tata profits. This sort of thing, at least outside Communist countries, does not really need refuting."
A. Lamb, *The China-India Border*, London, 1964, pp. 12-13.
130. FO 535/16, Enclosure in No. 475, Hardinge to Crewe, 18 December, 1913.
131. Ibid, No. 475, India Office to Foreign Office, 23 December, 1913.
132. FO 371/1613 58688 Nugent's Minute, 23 December, 1913.
133. Ibid, 58688, Gregory's Minute, 23 December, 1913.
134. FO 371/1928, 3071, Langley's Minute, 21 January, 1914.
135. FO 371/1608, 58099, Buchanan to Grey, 24 December, 1914.
136. McMahon's Final Memorandum, Enclosure 3, 30 April, 1914.
137. Jordan Papers, FO 350/11, Langley to Jordan, 18 November, 1914.
138. Jordan Papers, FO 350/12, Jordan to Langley, 17 September, 1914.
139. McMahon's Final Memorandum, Enclosure 3, 30 April, 1914.
140. FO 535/17, Enclosure in No. 35, 20 February, 1914.
141. L/PS/10/393, The whole volume consists of these intercepted telegrams.

142. L/PS/10/342, 4790, Hardinge to Crewe, 21 November, 1913.

143. F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet*, London, 1957, pp. 275-277.

144. L/PS/20/D162, Military Report on Presidency and Assam District, 1931, p. 172.

145. C. U. Aitchison's *Treaties*, pp. 34-35. For commercial and other economic benefits to Britain, that is, including the right to export Indian tea to Outer Tibet free of duty and the avoidance of any reference to a customs tariff, see FO 535/18, Enclosure in No. 26, Political Officer (C. A. Bell) Sikkim to India, 15 May, 1915.

146. For a judicious survey of the problem of India's northern borders, see A. Lamb, *The India-China Border*, London, 1964 ; the same author's *McMahon Line* Vol. II, London, 1966. Dorothy Woodman's *Himalayan Frontiers*, London, 1969, is also a useful study, as is P. L. Mehra's, *The McMahon Line and After*, Delhi, 1974.

147. FO 535/15, No. 123, Buchanan to Grey, 17 May, 1914. FO 371/1610, No. 10677, Nugent's Minute, 6 March, 1913.

148. *Article 10 :*

'The Government of China hereby agrees to pay such compensation as may be justly due for losses incurred between the 1st January, 1905, and date of signature of present treaty by Government and subjects of Thibet and by Nepalese and Ladakhis in that country, in consequence of acts done by Chinese officials and soldiers. Similarly the Government of Thibet agrees to grant an amnesty to all those officials and subjects of Thibet who have been imprisoned by Thibetan authorities by reason of their sympathy for Chinese, and also to restore to them all the property which for some reason has been confiscated by said authorities.'

149. *Article 6 :*

'Article 3 of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article 9(d) of the Anglo-Thibetan Convention of 1904 the term "foreign Power" does not include China.

Not less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British

commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.

No rights of monopoly as regards commerce or industry shall be granted to any official or private companies, institutions, or individuals in Thibet.'

150. *Article 8 :*

'The British agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhassa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Thibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the convention of the 17th September, 1904, between Great Britain and Thibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.'

151. FO 535/17, No. 130, Buchanan to Grey, 19 May, 1914; see also, Ibid, No. 123, Buchanan to Grey, 17 May, 1914 and No. 127, Buchanan to Grey, 18 May, 1914.
152. Ibid, No. 133, Hardinge to Crewe, 21 May, 1914.
153. FO 371/1930, 23144, Minute by A. Hirtzel, 21 May, 1914.
154. FO 535/17, No. 134, Grey to Buchanan, 22 May, 1914.
155. FO 371/1930, 26093, Buchanan to Grey, 10 June, 1914.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid, Minute on Tripartite Convention and Russia, by R. T. Nugent, 11 June, 1914.
158. Hardinge Papers, Volume 120, Crewe to Hardinge, 1 May, 1914.
159. Hardinge Papers, Volume 120, Hardinge to Crewe, 3 June, 1914.
160. For final draft of 3 July 1914, see Aitchison's *Treaties, pp.* 35-37.
161. Jordan Papers, FO 350/12, Jordan to Langley, 4 May, 1914.
162. A. P. Rubin, 'The Position of Tibet in International Law', *China Quarterly*, London, 1968, Vol. 35, pp. 110-154.
163. T. J. Lawrence, *The Principles of International Law*, London, 1937, p. 56.
164. Ibid, p. 57.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid, p. 58.

167. Aitchison's *Treaties*, p. 38.
168. A. K. Wu, *China and the Soviet Union*, London, 1950, p. 45.
169. C. G. Fenwick, *International Law*, London, 1952, p. 113.
170. McMahon's Final Memorandum, 8 July, 1914.
171. Hardinge Papers, Volume 93, Hardinge to Sanderson 22 January, 1914.
172. "Sidelights on the Tibetan Situation" by "A Wandering Naturalist", Pioneer Mail, Allahabad, 24 July, 1914, pp. 32-33.

CHAPTER VI

AN EPILOGUE : THE IMPERIAL DILEMMA

Anglo-Tibetan relations were a kaleidoscope reflecting a great many themes, from the ascendency of British arms in India to the eventual triumph of empire. And while an empire so immense in its territorial expanse, so diverse in its multitude of peoples and races, brought with it for its administrators the matching benefits of power and prestige, it also threw up deep and perplexing problems. How, for instance, to formulate policies that would reconcile the economic or political interests of its different members. To keep such an empire on an even keel, to meet the challenge of jealous competitors, be it in the Bosphorus, Egypt, Afghanistan, Persia, or the Far East, would tax the keenest intellect as well as generate on occasion considerable tension within the body politic.

So while for the first century and a quarter Anglo-Tibetan relations at a basic level represented an uncomplicated interplay between the economic and political needs of British India to gain access to the trans-Himalaya, and the Tibetan resolve to deny it entry, they also operated on another plane under the pressures of Britain's relationship with China, her rivalry with Russia ; of Tibet's own historic ties with the Mongols and the Manchus, and its possible links with the Tsarist Empire. Furthermore, by the time Anglo-Tibetan relations were moving to a climax at the start of the 20th century considerations of European *Realpolitik* were determining as never before the course of political developments in Asia.

Thus, as the perspectives of Curzon would differ from those of Hastings, so too would their diplomatic methods be dissimilar. The first British Governor General represented a nascent power in the form of a trading company ; his Viceregal

successor epitomised the high noon of its imperial authority. When Curzon grew to maturity the rulers of British India had already set their sights beyond the engirdling ranges of the Hindu Kush and Karakorum deep into the heart of Central Asia. They had begun contesting with Russia the right to dominate its markets, to bend its political direction to their will. The spoils were rich and tempting, for the Chinese Empire, apart from an occasional spasm, lay inert and moribund.

This, then, was the Great Game, in which Cayley, Shaw, Forsyth and Younghusband exemplified the values of an ascendant bourgeoisie in search of fresh imperial outlets ; where the explorer was soldier, surveyor, political agent, commercial prospector, linguist and diplomat. But the Russian advance aided by geographical contiguity and railway development proved inexorable ; slowly the British dream dissolved. Thwarted, they turned to pastures new. In the Himalayas an equally inspiring tradition had been taking root. Bogle, Turner, Manning and Moorcroft were followed by a group of Indians known as the 'Pundits', the best known of whom was Sarat Chandra Das, an explorer and scholar of the first rank. In their footsteps, in the early years of this century, went Younghusband, O'Connor, Bell and Bailey. While Curzon had little time for the desk-bound bureaucrat, he extolled the virtues of the frontiersmen who were, for him, the living embodiments of the imperial ideal he cherished so dearly.

Although a plateau, Tibet is criss-crossed by mountains, and while on the whole it was thinly populated, the bulk of its people lived in the general area of Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse. The climate here is relatively milder, its soil more fertile. It also lay adjacent to India, the distance from Darjeeling to Lhasa being no more than 300 miles. India's Mongolian fringe, the peoples and states of the southern Himalayas, had ties of race, language, culture, religion and commerce with the rulers at Lhasa. These the British sought to exploit for their own ends. Tibet's other links were with the Manchu dynasty of China in which political and

commercial factors played a vital role. However, at the close of the 19th century Lhasa's political subordination to Peking was increasingly under question, for the spirit of Tibetan independence was abroad, and the 13th Dalai Lama, the first to attain his majority for over a century, was determined to free his country from Chinese tutelage.

Wherein lay the promise of the Tibetan market ? It lay in the fact that, apart from the basic items of agriculture (even these were in scarce supply in Western Tibet), most articles of consumption came from abroad, that is, from China, Central Asia and the Himalayan borderland, these purchases being largely financed by the devotional offerings of gold which flowed in from Mongolia. Heading these commodities was tea, an inferior brand of which was imported from China. The Tibetan thirst for this beverage seemed insatiable, and the Chinese used this as a weapon to maintain their influence at Lhasa, particularly when their military power was on the wane.

Confronted with this spectacle, the British marvelled at the profits which could be made if the Tibetan demand could be met by suppliers of the Indian product. This became the urgent refrain of publicists, pamphleteers, and the leaders of the Indian tea industry, in whose grand scheme all stood to gain : the Tibetans blessed with a finer brew from Darjeeling or Assam would throw overboard the gritty mixture from Szechuan, the plantations in India would thrive and, not least, the Indian Government would win powerful allies in Lhasa. Alas, for the best-laid plans ! The Tibetans, stubborn creatures of habit, refused to oblige : the hope of winning a new market proved to be a mirage, and Lhasa continued to keep its doors firmly shut to the British. Was it to force the Tibetans to drink Indian instead of Chinese tea that Curzon sent Younghusband to Lhasa, as Rosebery wittily remarked ? The answer must plainly be no. Imperial policies were usually fashioned by a multiplicity of factors, more so when the man at the helm was Curzon.

The Viceroy having failed in his attempts to establish relations with Lhasa through a variety of intermediaries turned

his thoughts to other methods. If trade could not lead, the flag could not follow. The order, therefore, had to be reversed and the 'anachronism' which determined that the ruler of British India could not even exchange a written communication with the head of a neighbouring country was forcibly removed. It was the possibility of Russian intrigue at Lhasa, with its attendant danger to the British position in the trans-Himalaya, which lent urgency to the prevailing situation. Already with the aid of a Buriat Mongol named Dorjieff, the Dalai Lama seemed to be seeking the patronage of the Tsar. Tibetan missions to the Russian capital were being received with honour and ceremony. Was this the prelude to more sinister developments ? Russia had worsted Britain north of the Hindu Kush and Karakorum ; for over a century she had been sweeping southwards and eastwards absorbing huge swathes of territory and, after each advance, closing them to foreign commerce : a menace to anyone who stood in the way of her expansion.

Material interest and imperial pride dictated that this time Britain make a stand. She had justice on her side for the nearest point of Russian territory was over 1000 miles away from Tibet, while the Tibetan capital was within easy reach of the Indian border. A vital imperial interest was at stake and Curzon called for action, but much to his chagrin the response of his colleagues was discouraging.

What caused the Home Government to turn a deaf ear to the Viceroy's pleas ? The searing effect of the Boer War was one reason ; the fact that much of the responsibility for this conflict lay in the imperial zeal of a Pro-consul like Milner was another ; the memory of the Kabul disaster was a third ; fourth was the rising spectre of a naval threat from Germany which caused them to seek an understanding with France, and through her, with Russia as well ; they apprehended Japan's defeat in its conflict with Russia, and, as allies of Japan, were terrified at the prospect of being drawn into a war with the Tsarist Empire ; last, but not least, they were men who were largely insensitive to Indian affairs and Indian interests, and lacked any real

knowledge of the country which they ruled after a fashion. Downing Street had become a sort of Hotel Cecil, remarked Brodrick, a jest which carried more than a grain of truth. If Salisbury was struck by physical infirmity, his nephew, Balfour, suffered from an infirmity of purpose. They governed a sprawling empire, but to the priority of its interests they had given little thought.

The progress of the Younghusband Mission bore ample testimony to the Cabinet's indecision and weakness of will, and it was in a sense fitting that the expedition should end amid an uproar of controversy in which the moral weakness of Balfour was exceeded only by the malice of Brodrick.

While Curzon was hostile to Russia, it was not the cruder forms of Russophobia with which he was associated ; not for him were the anguished cries of a Russian invasion through the Khyber. Russia's game was far subtler : to put pressure on the British in the Himalayas in order to extract concessions elsewhere. An understanding with St Petersburg ? Yes, if one must, but only on the right terms. What Curzon found in London made him explode with scorn. Lansdowne had made a bargain with Russia on Egypt in connection with Tibet !

Years later, Hardinge, one of the principal architects of the Triple Entente, whose appointment as Viceroy owed much to the feeling in Government that he was ideally suited by training and temperament to still rather than arouse controversy, echoed Curzon within a year of assuming office : he, too, favoured a British agent at Lhasa ; insisted that Tibet's independence was the best safeguard for India's security along the Himalayas ; and argued against their surrender in any diplomatic bargain.

Hardinge was reacting to the consequences of Morley's policy. The Chinese whose power at Lhasa had long been a fiction were able to return to Tibet in strength. Not content with this substantial prize they were soon gnawing at the British position in the southern Himalayas with the covert aim of replacing it with their own authority. There was obviously no Chinese Morley in Peking.

The Chinese view of themselves and the world was mirrored

in the concept and workings of their tributary system. Apart from contacts with nomadic tribes on her northern and western frontiers China, for a millenium, had only the scantiest relations or knowledge of civilisations of an order comparable to her own. This has been largely responsible for moulding the Chinese outlook. Modern Chinese nationalism—which began manifesting itself as a political force after the defeat of the Boxer rebellion—while spurning and despising the Manchus for their weakness in the face of foreign agression was far less iconoclastic in its attitude towards China's imperial frontiers. The wine-skins of Kuomintang and Maoist thought contain considerable quantities of the traditional wine.

The struggle for Tibet refracted to a degree the contrasting elements of British and Chinese imperialisms : the first, organised on social and economic principles based on industry and heir to a wider European awakening, had carried the English and Western bourgeoisie as a whole to world hegemony, whether such power is measured politically, in military strength, artistic creation or scientific endeavour ; the second, resting on an agrarian economy under the control of a scholar-gentry had long ceased to bring enlightenment to its citizens, still less to its subject peoples.

With the cabinet rallying to the standard of France and Russia in August 1914, the British Government's best energies, both in India and at home, were to be concentrated exclusively on the war effort against Germany and her allies. Like many of his colleagues in London, Hardinge had regarded the Kaiser and his associates with deep distrust, and his worst foreboding confirmed, the Viceroy focused his full attention on the ensuing struggle in Europe and the Middle East. Indian concerns were never allowed to become a source of distraction.

Nor logically were Tibet's. In August 1914 the British supplied Lhasa with 5,000 rifles and 500,000 rounds of ammunition against a possible Chinese attack, informing the Dalai Lama at the same time, that no further assistance in the immediate future would be forthcoming.[1] Meanwhile Peking, under the mistaken impression that Britain and Tibet had proceeded to a

full signature of the Simla Convention was anxious to reopen negotiations. Jordan, however, recommended that the Foreign Office bide its time until China had become amenable to the idea of endorsing the Agreement as it then stood.[2] Never ones to wait upon events when it was not in their interest to do so, the Chinese resumed their war of attrition in Eastern Tibet. The continuing problems of this country underlined the truth of an unsigned comment made by an official in the Foreign Office two years before :

'The theory of the buffer state,' he remarked, has never worked properly except where the buffer state was strong enough to keep up an efficient Government and administration and to make encroachments by either neighbour a risky undertaking.'[3] Thus unresolved questions from the past continued to plague British policy makers, including the necessity of making a fresh approach to Russia after the war. Also of growing concern to them was the disturbing evidence of Japanese designs in the Far East.[4] As Britain's ostensible ally, Japan was quick to take advantage of the outbreak of hostilies in Europe by seizing German concessions in China. And in presenting her notorious Twenty One Demands, in violation of the open door principle, to an enfeebled Government in Peking, she displayed a vastly more ambitious hand. Japanese behaviour in the past, in particular their excessive curiosity over the proceedings at Simla, even when they were being supplied with relevant information through the normal channels, had raised disquiet in the Foreign Office. Jordan, who had witnessed their methods at first hand in Korea, was inclined to view them with considerable distaste. With certain militant Indian nationalists being given refuge in Tokyo fears were increasingly expressed that Japan harboured pan-Asiatic ambitions.[5] The War ended with Japan and the United States joining Britain to become the three dominant powers in the Far East. Russia, though temporarily crippled, showed signs of revolutionary vigour in lieu of her traditional military strength.

Exhausted by the war the Tsarist monarchy had collapsed, giving way to a succession of indeterminate governments ; the

last being overthrown by the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership. The ideology of the new regime, which assumed power on 7 November 1917, was based on a vision of social change transcending national boundaries and finding its ultimate fulfilment in the creation of a global socialist order. The new Russia was determined to break with old patterns of diplomacy; her leaders were prepared to throw overboard past agreements, treaties, and understandings to which their Tsarist predecessors had been parties, if by so doing they could quicken the pulse of world revolution. In India, the Raj having lost much of its lustre came under increasing domestic pressure; in China, British commercial rights and privileges were threatened by a flood-tide of Chinese nationalism spurred on by the spectacle of Bolshevik Russia hurling defiance at her adversaries. And Russia once regarded as a military threat, was now viewed by the British as the fountain-head of a dangerously subversive political creed.

As Europe licked the wounds of war a new balance of power emerged in the Pacific with Japan and America the principal contenders for supremacy. Unable alone to bear the burdens of empire in the Far East, Britain chose increasingly to rely on American strength. But with the United States firmly committed to the territorial integrity of China and her dominions, in the intensifying struggle with Japan, just as Britain had once bestowed her blessings on the ottomans in an endeavor to keep Russia at bay, Tibet's hope of securing international recognition of its *de facto* sovereign status with British help slowly disappeared.

With the Chinese mounting fresh attacks in the Tibetan Marches the Lhasa authorities were soon asking the Indian Government for additional military and diplomatic help.[6] Their request was turned down on the plea that British Consular officials in Szechuan did not perceive the imminence of such adventures, and that no representation to Peking by His Majesty's Embassy was therefore warranted.[7]

The Dalai Lama sent two letters to the Viceroy[8] stating that he had placed his trust in Britain, and while grateful for such

help as had already been rendered, he awaited the fulfilment of a British promise made to Lonchen Shatra that negotiations with China which had been suspended in Simla would be resumed at the earliest opportunity.[9] A sympathetic response in Tibet's hour of trial would serve to strengthen British influence in the country. As a compromise the Government of India agreed to supply Tibet with 200,000 additional rounds of ammunition on payment instead of the 3 million originally asked for, and loan her the services of four drill instructors under the supervision of the British Officer commanding the escort at Gyantse. But this concession had been made as much by news that the Tibetan authorities were seeking to negotiate secretly with China,[10] as by the official entreaties of Lhasa.

For the Government of India the question of military aid was complicated by the objections of the Nepalese Durbar to any possible strengthening of Tibet. Chandra Shamsher had been told that the first consignment of arms and ammunition given to Tibet in August 1914 had been sent with the express intention of helping it to thwart the Chinese. Further supplies could only rouse the ire of the Nepalese Prime Minister and it hardly took Manners-Smith, the British Resident at Katmandu. to remind his Government of Nepal's importance to Britain.[11] The Indian Government eventually assuaged Nepalese feelings by a gift of three thousand rifles.

Locked on the horns of this dilemma Britain felt that she could do little for Tibet, but was sufficiently concerned lest the Tibetans set their policy on a course detrimental to British interests. Even as the Simla Conference was drawing to a close, Nugent at the Foreign Office had warned that if a definite arrangement were not reached by the time the delegates departed, Lonchen Shatra, the most powerful pro-British official in Tibet, would lose his influence to factions favouring closer links with China.[12] While pro-Chinese elements may not have gained the upper hand—an unlikely probability with the head of the Tibetan Church so resolutely opposed to China—the Lonchen lost favour with the Dalai Lama, who

was dissatisfied with his conduct of the negotiations. He

> was summoned to an interview at six o'clock in the morning, but His Holiness kept him waiting till five o'clock in the afternoon. Shatra and his friends kept the rebuke as secret as possible, but of course it came out.[13]

Thereafter Lonchen Shatra gave ground to his opponents, becoming a lonely figure towards the end of his life.

If the Chinese had cause to view askance the division of Tibet into two zones, as Sir John Jordan would have his government believe, the Dalai Lama as the foremost champion of Tibetan independence had even more right to do so. Years later, his suspicions still rankling, he asked Bell to explain the motives behind the British decision. The Political Officer replied thus :

> The Chinese wanted to give the parts of Tibet near China Chinese names, and treat them as provinces of China. We arranged for them to be called Inner Tibet, thus keeping Tibet's name on them. Later on, if your army grows strong enough to ensure that Tibet's rights are respected, you may regain the rightful possession of this part of your country. But not if the name be lost.[14]

The explanation was interesting, not so much for its ingenuity, as for the fact that Rose in defending the Simla settlement had told Jordan that there was nothing to prevent China from establishing her control in Eastern Tibet if she chose to do so. It was obviously a case of allowing the two contestants to settle the issue through a trial of strength.

With a crisis brewing in Eastern Tibet, Lhasa needed more assistance than India was prepared to give. Not surprisingly the Tibetans turned to Japan in an endeavour to make her combine with Britain to check China's expansionist ambitions. The Japanese, for their part, were quick to respond. Four of their number, Kawaguchi, a scholar and priest, Tada, a monk in the Sera Monastery, Aoki, once Private Secretary to Count Otani (brother-in-law of the Emperor of Japan), now engaged in the study of Tibetan scriptures, and Yasojiro Kajima, a military officer engaged in training Tibetan troops, wielded considerable influence on behalf of their country at Lhasa. 'There should appear to be no doubt,' observed Hardinge in a despatch to Austen Chamberlain, who had replaced Crewe at the India Office,

> that Japanese interests in Tibet must increase as an inevitable sequel of Japan's policy in regard to China. In our opinion there is, however, no immediate danger of Japanese action affecting the relations between the British and Tibetan Governments, but the situation is one which will need to be closely watched.[15]

Bell who had already pressed Tibet's case for greater aid returned to this theme in another despatch. He reminded the Government of India that though Lhasa had made gains at Simla, most notably through the autonomy of Outer Tibet in whose administration the Chinese were forbidden to interfere and where no Chinese colonists were to be permitted to settle, it felt the loss of areas in Eastern Tibet which were under its control before Chao Erh-feng's invasion. Against this the strategic and commercial advantages won by the British were immeasurably greater. In the former category could be included the removal of Chinese pressure on the Indian frontier, from Kashmir to Assam—some 1,500 miles. More specifically,

> the cession by Thibet to us of the Tawang district, a country with an area of some 2,000 square miles, and much of it fertile. Also the cession of other tracts of Thibetan territory bordering on the territories of the hill tribes of the north-eastern frontier. We have thus been able to form buffer territories along the whole northern frontier of Assam, between it and Thibet. Formerly Thibetan territory in Tawang adjoined the plains of Assam, and might at any rate have been occupied by Chinese troops. These cessions are naturally of great importance.[16]

Commercially, Britain gained by acquiring the right to export Indian tea to Outer Tibet free of duty, and by getting monopolies in Tibet abolished. She scored politically by establishing the right to communicate directly with the Government at Lhasa.

China by an adroit mixture of cajolery and force was trying to reduce Tibet. The campaign in the Marches was costing the Government at Lhasa dear for it meant that a relatively large force of 10,000 Tibetans had to be kept in proper fettle to withstand the repeated thrusts of the Chinese. And as the Chinese were in occupation of the more fertile parts of the

country Tibet was hard pressed for food. To give the Tibetans temporary relief Bell suggested that they be allowed to levy a simple customs tariff on exports of, say, one rupee per maund of wool and on other articles at similarly moderate prices. Tibetans felt that they had a better right to tax their own products going out than foreign goods coming in. The war had altered the state of affairs that had existed at the time of the Simla Conference when the British refused to permit such a tariff. As evidence, Bell pointed out that the export of Tibetan wool, the country's chief staple, from India had been prohibited, making the mills of Cawnpore (Kanpur) its sole purchasers, so depressing the price of the product. It seemed, therefore, that the Government of India while objecting to a Tibetan monopoly had established a monopoly of its own.

His second recommendation was that Tibet be supplied with machine guns and mountain guns. Its troops although ill-armed in comparison with the Chinese had performed admirably. But the country's shortage of trained men and adequate weaponry could in time become a serious disadvantage, and it was for India to make good this deficiency. Bell described his proposals as moderate and reminded the Government of the loss to India should Tibet fall to China.

The Viceroy and his advisers proved unsympathetic. They saw no reason for urgent action as Lhasa was reported to be parleying secretly with China ; hence a British approach now could be misinterpreted as a sign of undue anxiety, and might tempt the Tibetans to make further demands.

> As regards the actual proposals which you put forward, the Government of India are not inclined, at the present time of grave preoccupation, to take up so complicated a question as the levy of a customs tariff on exports from Thibet to India. This question would not only involve the examination of all the conditions along the whole length of the Indo-Thibetan frontier, but would necessitate a consideration of the trade relations between Thibet and Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Further, if a tariff were to be permitted, the Government of India would require some guarantee that it would be levied in such a manner as to preclude abuse and corruption, which could only result in hardship to

individuals and the strangling of Indo-Thibetan trade. Such a guarantee would not in all probability be forthcoming.
As regards the procuring of machine guns and mountain guns for Thibet, in view of the fact that there is a serious shortage, particularly of machine guns, in the main theatres of war, and that the Government of India cannot secure sufficient for their own needs, it is out of the question at present to contemplate the purchase of them for the Thibetan Government.....The present view of the Government of India is that we must mark time and wait developments in Thibet.[17]

Such was the tone of this letter that Bell had a right to feel aggrieved. His proposals were modest in scope. It is difficult to believe that the mightiest empire in the world, however hard pressed, was unable to spare a few machine guns, or allow temporary tariff to be imposed by a country for whom these minor tokens of generosity meant a great deal. It was absolutely right that Bell should draw his Government's attention to the considerable territorial and commercial concessions made by Lhasa in the expectation that it could count on appropriate British help against China. It is quite understandable that Lonchen Shatra should lose favour with his countrymen for having made a one-sided bargain at Simla (the price of such failures in more developed nations has often been more severe). There was nothing in this attitude that 'would appear to show a curious want of logic on the part of Tibetans generally.'[18]

Shuckburgh of the India Office showed in a minute how unimpressed he was by the Government of India's attitude. In his view Simla's assertion that the Anglo-Tibetan Secret Declaration had brought advantages to both sides without at the same time being willing to scrutinise the gains of either party was a lame response, for 'Mr. Bell's whole point is that, as things at present stand, the Tibetans are not deriving any advantage (though we *are*) from the Declaration.'[19] However, Shuckburgh agreed with the Government of India's decision to withhold further supplies of arms for the reasons they had cited, and because the Nepalese Durbar would regard such a move with hostility.

He was more sympathetic to the proposal to allow Tibet to

impose a light tariff on its exports, and appeared somewhat mystified at the Viceroy's negative response. For the moment the matter had of necessity to be kept in abeyance. 'But it will certainly be necessary, when the time comes for a more active policy, to consider the whole question in a more sympathetic light.'[20]

Just as the general view in the Government was that a settlement of these questions had to await the conclusion of the War, it was also commonly believed that Britain's agreements with Russia and China over Tibet had to be similarly deferred. The discussion began in the first place due to a Russian proposal to Britain in March 1915 that the talks on Northern Afghanistan between the two countries suspended in July 1914 be resumed on the old lines.[21] Opinion in the Foreign Office was against any immediate resumption.[22] It was felt, furthermore, that in view of the altered situation there was little advantage in throwing Afghanistan into the melting pot unless the British were able to secure a substantial *quid pro quo* in Tibet. The Government of India summed up the strong British feeling on the subject when it remarked that the time had come to impress Russia that a change in her

> attitude towards British interests in Asia is very desirable and that as India, standing side by side with Great Britain and her Colonies is supporting the Franco-Russian Alliance in five theatres of war to the very utmost of her strength and resources, and is even assisting to obtain Russian predominance in Constantinople and the Dardanelles, she has the right to expect Indian interests in Asia to be fairly and even generously treated, and without creating needless difficulties in Afghanistan, Thibet and elsewhere. For it can only be upon a basis of equity and confidence with a due regard to the central interests of each, that the future peace of Asia can be securely maintained and controlled by the British and Russian Governments.[23]

Towards the end of June, Jordan reported from Peking that the Chinese had made an overture to him on Tibet. While making it clear that they still could not accept the Simla Convention as it stood they were prepared as a concession to evacuate the strategically important town of Chamdo and allow

for its inclusion in Outer Tibet. The British Ambassador was personally of the view that the moment was opportune for settling the question.[24] Hardinge predictably favoured deferring a final decision till the end of the war, after which Britain having first come to terms with Russia on all Asiatic questions, could safely deal with China.[25] It was an opinion which Crewe shared, for :

> To sign the Convention with China before this is done is to invite future trouble. To leave the question an open one between Russia and ourselves till the war is over is to abandon the rights and advantages which our action in the Dardanelles fairly give us.[26]

The Secretary of State suggested that the Foreign Office approach St. Petersburg immediately with a reminder that British acquiescence in Russia's occupation of Constantinople deserved a reciprocal gesture.

Hirtzel was less optimistic. While he accepted that with the war on Sazanof could perhaps plead his cause with less speciousness than before, he thought that 'Tibet is too good a lever for what they want in Afghanistan to be lightly abandoned. I am also afraid that if we approach the Russian Government they will at once tell the Chinese, who, scenting concession, will raise their terms'.[27]

In April 1916, Hardinge, having completed his tenure as Viceroy returned to Britain, where he was persuaded by Grey to take up his old post as Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, as Nicolson, the current incumbent, had expressed a strong desire to retire.[28]

The new Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, continued the policy of his predecessor. In July the Indian Government refused Lhasa's request to be permitted to purchase machine guns abroad, or allow the passage of such articles through India. However, as a sop, the Viceroy, in the following month, made known his willingness to supply the Tibetans with 200,000 rounds of ·303 ammunition, but refused to include machine guns in his list.

In September 1916 the British Legation in Peking penned a Memorandum on the Tibetan Question[29] and placed it before the

Foreign Office and the Government of India. It urged Britain to reopen the Simla Convention for discussion as soon as possible, for once the Chinese set about the business of sending a military expedition into Tibet, Tibetan resistance would quickly crumble. The time had thus come for Britain to take the initiative in resuming negotiations with China before such an eventuality occurred and reduced her bargaining power. But for the Chinese to be interested in fresh talks certain British concessions had to be made, chief of which was a modification of the Sino-Tibetan frontier and the abolition of the Inner and Outer zone. For the rest Britain and China would have equal rights and privileges in the country, and Tibet would not be represented in the Chinese parliament. The contents of this memorandum were given considerable weight in Whitehall, and from India Chelmsford described it thus to the Secretary of State :

> This paper appears to me to be a most able review of the situation at a time when it was written, and there is undoubtedly a great deal of force in the contention that the Chinese Government will never adhere to an instrument so unfavourable to themselves as the Simla Convention of July 1914. There is no doubt, I am afraid, that Sir Henry McMahon adopted an extreme pro-Tibetan attitude throughout the Simla Convention in 1914, and that the Convention then drawn up was such as no Chinese Government was likely to accept *in toto*. If we are ever likely to come to an understanding with China on the subject, it seems certain that the Convention will require considerable modification, particularly as regards Inner Tibet before China will subscribe to it. For the time being, however, it would appear impossible to move in the matter, first, because there is no stable Chinese Government with whom to reopen negotiations : second, because with our grave preoccupations it is obviously undesirable to reopen the question at present if it can be avoided ; and third, because the reopening of the question on the lines suggested in the Memorandum referred to would certainly excite the liveliest suspicion in Tibet and tend to estrange the Dalai Lama at a time when our relations with him are more satisfactory than ever before···. My object therefore in calling attention to this Memorandum is not to suggest immediate action, but merely to ask you to bear the matter in mind and to realise that when the time comes we shall probably have to adopt towards China a much less uncompromising attitude than

we did in 1914, if we are ever to obtain a working settlement in regard to Tibet.[30]

The Secretary of State's reply approvingly echoed the Viceroy's remarks.[31] As both were relatively new to their office their illusions about the measures necessary to unfreeze Anglo-Chinese relations over Tibet, fed by Jordan's reputed expertise, are understandable.

But while these developments took shape, changes in Government were taking place in London. In December 1916 Asquith's ministry had fallen and its successor was headed by Lloyd George. At the Foreign Office, Grey was replaced by Balfour.

Meanwhile Sino-Tibetan relations continued on a precariously uncertain course as did relations between the Nepal Durbar and Lhasa. Chandra Shamsher complained of overbearing Tibetan behaviour in a letter to the British Resident at Katmandu, hinting darkly that but for the considerable number of Gurkha troops engaged in Britain's war effort, Nepal might have taken stronger steps to redress her loss of honour in Tibet[32].

And Hardinge who had never forgiven Lhasa for persisting in its requests for greater British help after the conclusion of the Simla Conference, and then voicing disappointment at not receiving it, minuted the file thus : 'The Nepalese Army would simply walk round the Tibetans. I am not sure that a lesson would not do them a great deal of good.[33] It is ironical to observe how a man who took such pride in never losing sight of the tricks and strategems of German diplomacy should have fallen for one played by a ruler of a less formidable power. The local Indian officials on the other hand were quick to perceive the true nature of the situation. According to Bell, Nepal had lost her privileged position in Tibet as an intermediary after the Younghusband Mission, and the subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama to India five years later cemented Anglo-Tibetan ties. It was thus natural that Nepal should feel disappointed and angry but it was one of the changes that had become inevitable with Tibet's widening political horizons. Bell warned :

> If we should support Nepal in an unjust cause against Tibet, or in a cause which Tibet for serious reasons regards as unjust we run the risk of driving Tibet into the arms of China. And if Chinese power should be re-established at Lhasa, not only shall we have the Chinese menace on the North-Eastern frontier, but Nepal also will entirely lose her position in Tibet. Even during the few years that China exercised power in Lhasa recently the Nepalese position as regards these rights of extra-territoriality were seriously weakened, as shown by the Nepalese agents of the time,[34]

Major W. L. Campbell, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, brought Nepalese-Tibetan relations into clearer focus at a more basic level when he observed :

> The feeling among the lower classes in Tibet appears to be generally hostile to the Nepalese. The people of Gyantse regard the small Nepalese trader in the bazaar such as the Bengali villager regards the Pathan money lender and trader... the attitude of the Nepalese subjects in Tibet is one of superiority and independence apparently based on the confident feelings that the Tibetan officials are not in a position to interfere with them in any way.[35]

By the middle of 1917 the Government of India had modified its previously unsympathetic attitude towards Tibetan demands. Bell was asksd to inform Lhasa[36] that, while its latest request for machine guns could not be immediately met, once the War in Europe was over supplies of these would be made available. In the meantime the Indian Government expressed a readiness to train batches of Tibetan soldiers in drill and musketry, and Tibetan mechanics at the Dum Dum and Ishapur ordinance factories in the simple manufacture and repair of weapons.

At the Foreign Office the question of a possible British approach to China was being earnestly debated. Alston had endorsed the British Embassy's Memorandum on Tibet of 24 September, 1916 (a copy of which was brought by Jordan to London in the following November when he returned home on leave). In his despatch of 2 June 1917[37] he restated his belief that China seemed willing to reopen negotiations with Britain. But in order that Britain should not be placed at a disadvantage, in the eventuality that such negotiations did commence, Alston

suggested that his Vice-Consul at Tachienlu, O. R. Coales, should be permitted to visit Lhasa in order to assess the political situation in Tibet, and particularly to gauge the strength of the pro-Chinese party within the country.

Jordan, who was in London at the time, penned a minute, the substance of which was recorded in the Foreign Office's departmental note to the India Office.[38] In it he expressed himself in favour of modifying the Sino-Tibetan frontier as laid down by the Simla Convention ; of reopening negotiations with Peking while China was still weak and distracted, and before Japan was able to extend its influence in China's Central Asian dependencies. He also felt that the collapse of Russian imperialism would stiffen China's resolve in Tibet and Mongolia, with the latter reverting to Chinese allegiance.

Jordan was convinced that Russian agents like Korostovetz and Russian gold were the primary causes of Mongolia's defection from China. The resurgence of Mongol nationalism ; the methods of Chinese imperialism involving the forcible colonisation of vast areas of the Mongol territory by Chinese farmers or the economic exploitation of the indigenous inhabitants by Chinese merchants and money-lenders, not to speak of their ethnocentric attitudes, do not seem to have carried sufficient weight with him.[39] The British Ambassador was firmly against Coales going to Lhasa since any such visit could reactivate Chinese policy in Tibet. Others in the Foreign Office, like Hardinge, were also against the visit on the grounds that it would constitute a breach of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, and that its possible results were not likely to outweigh the risks entailed.

The Dalai Lama in the meantime had invited Bell to Lhasa. Edwin Montagu (who had succeeded Chamberlain as Secretary of State for India in July 1917) agreed with Chelmsford that such a visit would be inadvisable as it would contravene the terms of the Russian accord. Otherwise, in his view, the visit would serve a useful purpose, for unlike Coales, Bell's invitation had come from the head of the Tibetan state himself.[40].

Hardinge expressed his approval of Bell as an emissary,

but like Montagu, he thought the visit inopportune on the grounds that it would arouse Russian suspicions of British good faith and would also open the door for Russian travellers such as Dorjieff.[41]

It was finally agreed by India and the Foreign Office that the whole question, including a fresh approach to China, should be kept in abeyance till the end of the War. But Lhasa, facing Chinese pressure on its eastern frontier, was understandably reluctant to accommodate itself to the British timetable. In a letter to Bell,[42] the Tibetan Government stated that in their view China was waiting to see if Britain did badly in the European War before launching a full scale attack on their country. Britain, they said, was Tibet's only hope. The current situation was costing their country dear, for with the Tibetan march land under Chinese occupation Lhasa was losing valuable revenue from monasteries in the area. Furthermore, the burden of keeping a relatively large standing army was proving a considerable strain on the country's scarce human resources. As China was currently distracted by domestic troubles the Tibetan Government were of the view that the moment was ripe for British pressure to be applied on Peking to participate in a reconvened tripartite conference between Britain, China and Tibet.

Bell, in a covering letter to the Indian Government,[43] drew their attention to the similarity of views held by Lhasa and Jordan on the need to approach China for fresh negotiations on Tibet. Such negotiations could be held on the basis of the British Legation's memorandum notwithstanding its disadvantages to Tibet. He was confident about persuading the Tibetans to accept this without at the same time jeopardising the good relations which prevailed between Tibet and Britain. Bell's one principal objection to the memorandum was that it allowed Chinese agents into Tibet. He was in favour of expunging this proposal. But be that as it may, prompt British action was needed, for to leave the Tibetan question in its present unsettled state held obvious dangers for India.

As if to underline Bell's apprehensions news reached London of the notes exchanged between Japan and the U. S. A., wherein the latter recognised its partner's 'special interests'[44] in China, while the Japanese issued 'a declaration of respect for the Open Door and the independence and territorial integrity of China.'[45] The India Office expressed concern lest this agreement affect British rights in Tibet—which in the view of the Foreign Office was hardly likely since Britain had no intention of appending her signature to these documents.[46].

The Government of India having previously agreed with the position taken at Whitehall of deferring discussion of the Tibetan question with China till after the War now had second thoughts. The Viceroy proposed to place before Lhasa the substance of the British Embassy memorandum as suggested by Bell. And if the Tibetan Government proved responsive, then the authorities in Peking could be officially approached. Meanwhile as a token of goodwill the Viceroy intended to present Lhasa[47] with 500,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. The India Office responded positively to Chelmsford's suggestion by drawing up a note to the Foreign Office in which it was stated as a negotiating tactic that, in exchange for a British willingness to rectify the Sino-Tibetan frontier, Britain should be accorded the right to station a representative at Lhasa, as indeed had been suggested in the British Embassy's Tibetan memorandum.[48]

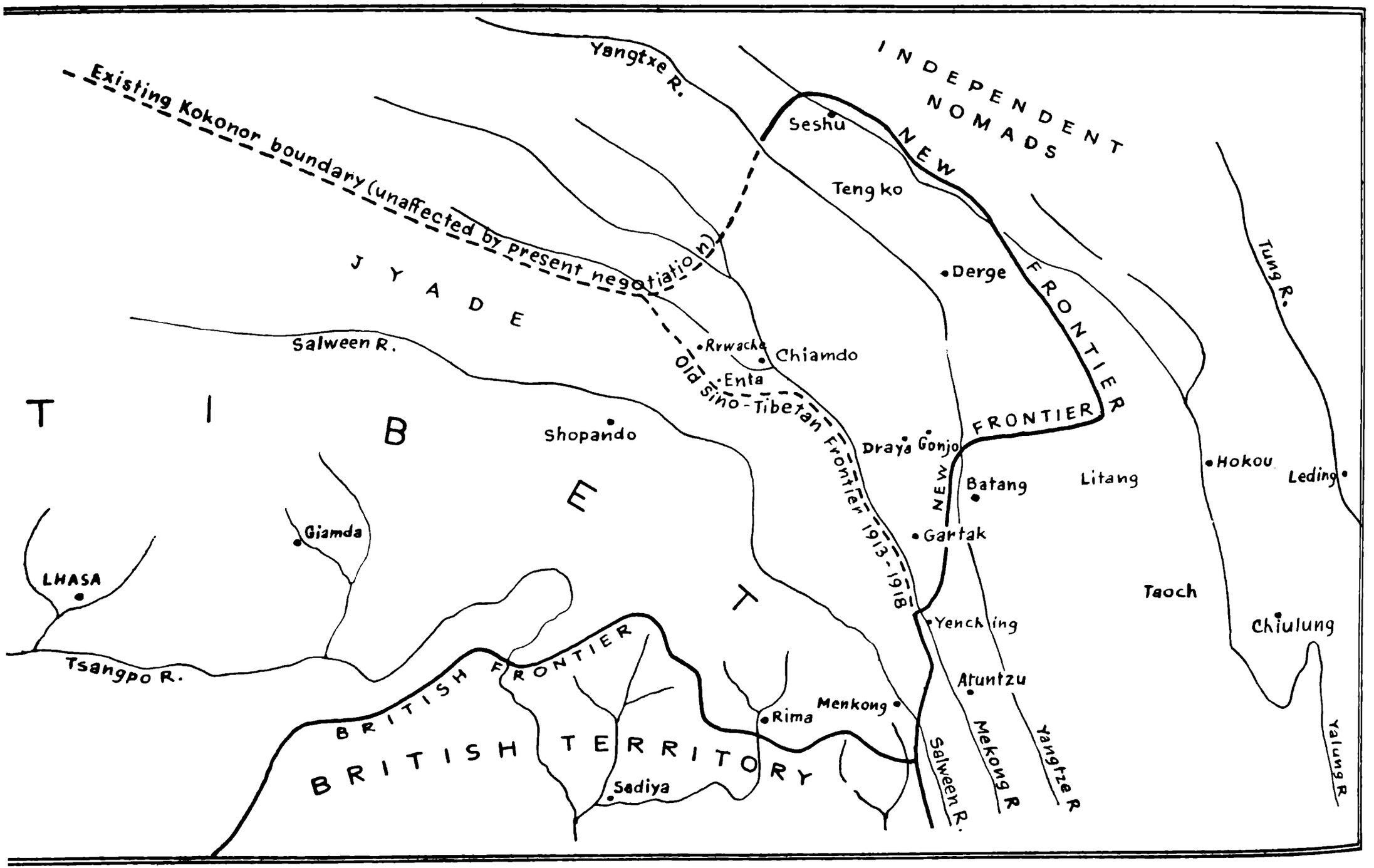
The Foreign Office accepted the Indian Government's suggestion on supplying ammunition to Tibet, but the proposal to station a British representative at Lhasa evoked familiar fears. Langley wished that the British Embassy had avoided mentioning the question (it may be safely surmised that Alston was the moving spirit behind this proposal, for Jordan, a close friend of Langley's, was less disposed to accept Indian arguments over Tibet), while Hardinge felt that to win acceptance for a British agent at the Tibetan capital without Russia's consent would present her with an opportunity of ignoring the arrangement over Afghanistan. Balfour concurred. Russia's current state, in his view, might well be a temporary phenomenon, and Britain could therefore not act unilaterally.[49]

The unspoken hopes behind this reasoning may well have been that Russia, notwithstanding her new Bolshevik Government, could be persuaded to remain on the battlefield and so continue contributing to the Allied war effort. Such illusory hopes lasted a few more months, for in March 1918.Russia signed a separate peace with Germany at Brest-Litovsk and ceased thereafter to be a belligerent.

Jordan, however, stuck firmly to the decision reached in August 1917 by Whitehall and the Government of India that the approach to China over Tibet be postponed until the War was over.[50] In his view, China at present was too unstable and divided for any British initiative to bear fruit. However, Bell's despatch[51] pointing out the danger of a China, controlled and directed by Japan, intriguing on India's frontier must have struck a responsive chord, for Jordan agreed to discuss the Tibetan question informally with the Chinese Foreign Ministry.[52]

But whether China had any serious intention of reaching a settlement remotely acceptable to Britain was open to doubt. Eric Teichman, the British vice-consul at Tachienlu, who had great knowledge and considerable personal experience of Tibetan matters, gained access to a document submitted to the Central Government in Peking by the Chinese Frontier Commissioner, Yin Ch'eng-hsien, in which was outlined an ambitious military and political scheme for the reorganization of China's military and administrative structure in the frontier region, and the eventual subjugation of Tibet.[53] And the fact that Commissioner Yin, in Teichman's view, was the ablest Chinese frontier official since the days of Chao Erh-feng and Fu-Sung-mu lent greater weight to the document in question. Events on the Sino-Tibetan frontier took their own course. Active hostilities—a frequent occurrence in these parts—broke out between the Chinese and the Lhasa army commanded by the Kalon Lama. Only this time, the Chinese force steadily lost ground from the middle of April, until in the following month, the Tibetans climaxed their successes by carrying the strategic town of Chamdo by assault.[54]

In order to keep watch over events Jordan suggested that



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Teichman be appointed to mediate between the two sides, a suggestion strongly endorsed by the Indian Government and eventually accepted by both belligerents. The Tibetans were glad to avail themselves of the services of a British official, who they knew would do nothing that was detrimental to their interests, as a channel of communication with their adversaries. It was, moreover, an opportunity which they had often sought in the past, of involving the British in their struggle against China. The Chinese for their part were less enthusiastic about a mediator, but calculated no doubt, that his presence might help reduce Tibetan military pressure on their weak and demoralised forces.

The Tibetan field commander, the Kalon Lama, who had a realistic appreciation of the military situation favoured a compromise in the territorial alignment of the region. Teichman, himself, thought that the Yangtse-Mekong watershed constituted the best possible boundary between the two sides. The Kalon Lama, however informed him in confidence that the Dalai Lama was determined to press for territory as far east as Tachienlu, and he thus appealed to the British mediator to use his Government's influence and make Lhasa see reason.[55]

The Government of India played their part by seeking to restrain Lhasa. In spite of Bell's recommendation Simla turned down a Tibetan request for a million rounds of ammunition[56] just as their military campaign against the Chinese was getting into full gear, while their later demand for artillery[57] following their capture of Chamdo, as a weapon of defence against a Chinese counter attack was similarly rejected.

Thanks to Teichman's efforts a provisional tripartite agreement was signed on 19 August 1918, establishing peace on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Under the terms of the Settlement Tibet was awarded an area which included Chamdo, Draya, Markham and Derge, while China got Yenching, Batang, Litang, Kantze, Chantui, and the Hora States. The Kalon Lama was vested with full authority by his superior to sign the document but his Chinese opposite number, General Liu, being unable to communicate with Peking, it was decided that the

agreement would become final only after the sanction of the Chinese Central Government had been received. Some three months later Teichman informed Jordan from Rongbatsa that after mutual adjustments to their provisional frontier both Chinese and Tibetans agreed to keep the peace for a year pending a decision by their Governments concerning the ratification of the treaty[58]

Jordan was full of praise for Teichman's achievement, which he described as being in the finest traditions of the British consular service. He also confessed, in the same despatch, the futility of his meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister who, like his predecessors, was obsessed with his country's sovereign rights in Tibet. Nevertheless, Sir John expressed a hope that an eventual settlement of the problem could be reached once the Northern and Southern factions within China had composed their differences.[59]

The Chinese game, however, was one of time-honoured deviousness. Three months before the Foreign Office had informed the British Ambassador that Alfred Sze, the Chinese Minister in London, was sending out telegrams to his Government calling on it to secure America's services as an arbitrator. Jordan rejected the move since China would find it convenient to apply such a principle 'to every difficulty that occurs and we should be reduced to inaction until a settlement was found in arbitration.'[60]

On 6 January 1919 Curzon became Acting Foreign Secretary, as Balfour was called to do duty at the Peace negotiations in Paris. He was never to return to his old post, for shortly after the Versailles Settlement, Curzon was asked to take over the permanent seals of office.

A few months later Jordan reported receiving a set of written proposals dated 30 May, from the Chinese Government, which contained the following four points :—(1) A statement that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory now included in notes to be exchanged to be inserted in treaty itself. (2) Chinese commissioners to be stationed at trade marts. (3) Insertion of a clause in the treaty to the effect that autonomous Tibet recog-

nised Chinese suzerainty. (4) A revision of the Sino-Tibetan frontier as laid down by the Simla Convention.

Jordan found points (1) and (3) unobjectionable. Concerning point (2) he submitted that the Chinese agents at the trade marts would be harmless provided the British as a counter-concession held out for the right to have a representative at Lhasa. The British Ambassador also found the details of China's concluding point negotiable. What he thus sought was a free hand to commence discussions with the Chinese. As a Tibetan presence in Peking would, in his view, be a hindrance, he wished to negotiate on behalf of Tibet, whose best interests he promised to uphold. The opportune moment had arrived since China seemed willing to talk.[61]

The Indian Government, whose opinion was solicited, were strongly in favour of consulting Tibet, as otherwise a treaty signed without its assent, would have little permanent value. They expressed misgivings about allowing in Chinese agents at the trade marts.[62] The activities of such agents between 1906-10 was recalled, as was the warning delivered only six months before by Campbell, that while the Tibetans were prepared to concede a great deal on other matters, they were determined to rid themselves of all Chinese interference in their internal affairs.[63]

Jordan was given permission to begin negotiations, but was asked to resist Peking's attempt to restore its agents at the Tibetan trade marts. As a last resort the British Ambassador could accept such an arrangement provided such agents confined their duties to matters affecting Sino-Tibetan trade.[64] Sir John was also asked to press for the right to station a British representative at Lhasa, a provision that was to involve only China and Britain, for in the Foreign Office view, the Anglo-Russian Convention was still valid despite its denunciation by the Soviet authorities.

A few weeks later the Foreign Office received an urgent telegram from Jordan announcing the abrupt suspension of the talks. The Chinese Foreign Minister said that as his government anticipated considerable opposition to the projected agree-

ment from within the country it felt unable to continue. Jordan saw the malevolent influence of Japan behind this decision,[65] a view which in his eyes was confirmed a few days later, by a conversation he had with a former member of the Chinese Legation in London.[66]

The breakdown of the talks must have come as a bitter blow to the British Ambassador, who had resolutely and consistently advocated their resumption, together with concessions from his Government on the Sino-Tibetan boundary.

The Chinese proposals, let it be said, enshrined all the old ambiguities and contradictions of past treaties and thus held little hope of providing a permanent solution to the problem. A strong China would one day have ample scope to interpret the provisions of such a settlement in a manner inimical to Tibetan aspirations or British interests. Lhasa communicated its reservations to the Indian Government : the prospect, it said, of acknowledging any Chinese rights in Tibet was an anathema, and such an agreement would have had little chance of acceptance. Even the Nepalese Prime Minister, in a conversation with the new British Resident, W. F. O'Connor, who had once been closely involved in his country's relations with Lhasa, recognised a more assertive national spirit in Tibet and accepted the fact that Nepal's treaty of 1856 with that country being wholly unequal was bound to be irksome to the Tibetan Government. When the Tibetans asked for its revision Nepal, he said, would be prepared to accede to their request.[67]

Jordan had seen the sinister hand of Japan behind the refusal of the Chinese Government to proceed with the talks. When pressed, the Japanese Ambassador in London, in an official conversation with Curzon, vigorously denied the charge.

China was in a state of turmoil ; the May Fourth Movement, with its anti-Western and anti-Japanese overtones, swept the country. Chinese opinion was particularly incensed over the transfer of Shantung from Germany to Japan. The Central Government at Peking was under constant attack for showing weakness in the face of imperialist agression, whether over Shantung, Tibet or Mongolia. In such a fluid situation the

Japanese without doubt sought to divert Chinese attention from their own expansionism to those of other powers. Hence their press campaign in China against alleged British attempts to annex Tibet, which aired every conceivable canard on the subject.[68] The United States even incurred the odium of financing Chinese student movements against Japan ! But the major stumbling block as far as the Tibetan negotiations were concerned was the tenacity with which the Chinese clung to their Manchu heritage in Tibet and Mongolia : nationalists are notoriously prone to detect the proverbial mote in the eye of a real or imagined foe while remaining blissfully insensitive to the beam in their own.

Taking advantage of Russia's temporary weakness in 1919 the Chinese President cancelled Mongolia's autonomous rights conceded only a few years before ; perhaps it was felt that given time China could similarly resume her control of Tibet.

With the war in Europe over, the question of arms for Tibet came up for review. Campbell, who had succeeded Bell as Political Officer, Sikkim, in April 1919 reported receiving an urgent request from Lhasa for machine guns in accordance with a past promise. Bell had apparently, in the Tibetan text of his note of 3 May 1916, conveyed an impression that supplies of this weapon would almost automatically follow the conclusion of the War.[69] The Indian Government were in favour of despatching 2 machine guns and 50,000 rounds of ammunition. Montagu agreed with their decision. The arms were paltry and could only be used for defensive purposes. The Tibetans had kept scrupulously to the terms of the Chamdo and Rongbatsa agreements and were keen to hold only what they already had. The Chinese on the other hand remained firm in their claims to Tibet and the prospect of their re-appearing on India's northeastern frontier was thus most unwelcome. Equally important the supplies in question would help retain Tibetan goodwill for Britain.[70]

The Foreign Office, however, barred the way. To supply arms to Tibet would, in their view, constitute a violation of the Arms Traffic Convention which had been signed in Paris on 10

September 1919. Under the terms of the Convention Britain could only export arms to Governments of other signatory powers. The agreement was drawn up presumably to restrict the flow of arms to sensitive areas of the world in the interests of international peace and stability. A principal aim was surely to limit the flow of Japanese armaments to China and thereby control Japan's political influence there. To make an exception now

> would create a highly undesirable situation were it to become known to the Chinese Government, and through them to the outside world, that with the approval of His Majesty's Government arms were being sold to the Tibetan Government when China is not only the acknowledged suzerain of Tibet but herself a party to the Arms Convention in question.[71]

Thanks, however, to men like Alston and Teichman this opposition slowly gave way to the recommendations of Bell and the Government of India. Teichman argued that if a 'British Dominion could join the League of Nations and sign the Arms Convention while remaining a part of the British Empire why should not Tibet do the same, without prejudice to Chinese suzerainty ?'[72]

The major theme in Anglo-Tibetan relations during the next five years was Britain's attempt to get China to participate in fresh engotiations over Tibet and Peking's refusal under a variety of pretexts to do so. In a conversation with Jordan the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs even accused Britain of coming in the way of an amicable settlement between China and Tibet. In his view, 'like Mongolians, Tibetans had been instigated by outside influences to fight Chinese against whom they had no grievance.'[73]

The mid-January 1920 Bell was asked by the Indian Government to return from retirement and resume his former position as Political Officer, Sikkim. The reason was obvious enough. A Chinese delegation, known as the Kansu Mission, had arrived in Lhasa at about this time in an effort to persuade Tibet to return to China's fold. But the Tibetan Government in an agitated note to India expressed their refusal

to commence negotiations with the Chinese visitors unless a British mediator was present.[74]

The Kansu Mission remained in the Tibetan capital till April 1920 without achieving their objective. Its visit, however, was a timely reminder to the British on the need to display a more positive attitude. The Dalai Lama, who held Bell in great personal regard, sent him an urgent invitation in September 1920 to visit Lhasa. This time the British Government agreed, for earlier in March the Foreign Secretary decided that the provision of the Anglo-Russian Convention which had hitherto prevented a British representative from going to Lhasa was no longer valid.[75]

Meanwhile Bell, given back his watching brief in the Himalayas, pressed strongly for the British Government to redeem their promise of arms to Tibet made during the War.[76] In his view the provisions and wording of the Arms Traffic Convention were sufficiently flexible for Lhasa to be supplied with its defence needs. More important, the security of India's north-eastern frontier demanded it. The question was still under discussion when Bell departed for Lhasa on 1 November, 1920, where he was to remain for nearly a year, and during which time he was able to renew his own cordial relations with the Dalai Lama and other leading personalities, much to the benefit of Anglo-Tibetan relations. His visit was vital as powerful forces within the country were beginning to favour an accommodation with China.[77] To restore Tibet's trust Britain had to supply her with the arms she needed, which he itemised as (1) 10 mountain guns ; (2) 20 machine guns ; (3) 10,000 rifles ; (4) 1,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition to be re-supplied every following year ; (5) help train Tibetan army ; (6) send two British mechanics to train Tibetans on how to make gun powder and rifles ; (7) mine prospectors to help develop Tibetan mines where there was every chance of gold being found.

Sir Charles reminded his superiors : 'From 1913 onwards we have encouraged the Tibetans to trust in us. At the signing of the Convention of 1914 they were promised the diplomatic

assistance of His Majesty's Government.....During the War we promised them machine guns.' It may be argued that the Arms Traffic Convention stood in the way of fulfilling such a commitment but this Convention had only been signed several months after the War ; moreover the reasoning behind the Entente decision not to supply China with weapons until conditions that were more settled did not apply to Tibet—a well ordered country whose stability would only be strengthened by reasonable quantities of such imports. 'By barring Tibet from buying munitions in India,' continued Bell, 'we are breaking promises which were made to her in the name of His Majesty's Government, we are undermining her hard won freedom and we are jeopardising the security of the northern frontier of India.' Should Britain renege on past promises Tibet might conceivably turn to Japan as the Mongols had done before. Furthermore, the Japanese being already a potent force in China, a possible Sino-Japanese combination in Tibet carried ominous implications for the safety of the Indian subcontinent. Also, without the Tibetan buffer India would be exposed to the virus of Russian Bolshevism.

> The northern frontier of India will fall under Japanese, as well as under Chinese influence. Will the new India, autonomous or semi-autonomous, be able to protect adequately fifteen hundred miles of such a frontier?..... She will no longer have what is perhaps the best land frontier in the world, the lofty plateau of Northern Tibet. Fifteen hundred miles from east to west, four or five hundred miles from north to south, never less than sixteen thousand feet above the sea and almost uninhabited, this inhospitable table-land is the real barrier of India to the north.

Thus, 'we should wait no longer for a China that does not intend to negotiate until she finds it definitely in her interest to do so.....Finally, we should recognise India's vital interest in this problem and the dangers that threaten her in her present policy of inaction.' And recognising this Britain should without further delay send Lhasa arms listed above. It had never been a British aim, said Bell,

> to dominate Tibet. That would truly be a foolish policy..... We want her to be free to develop on her own lines. This

> will mean drawing supplies from India or Britain, e.g. munitions, experts to aid them in developing their country etc. Proceeding on these lines, they will be economically and militarily dependent on us to just that extent that is desirable, and they will promote our interests by promoting their own.

He ended on a high note of warning :

> China is pressing, Japan has begun to press. We cannot bury our heads in the sand, like the ostrich, trying to prevent dangers by ignoring them. Our only chance of keeping out Japan and China is by establishing our influence in the country first. Government have an exceptional, possibly an unique, opportunity of settling this question now, while I am in Lhasa.[78]

While Bell was in Lhasa Jordan's tenure as British Ambassador had to come to an end. His replacement, Beilby Alson, whose views on Tibet were in close accord with those of the Indian Government, had even advocated the stationing of a British Resident at Lhasa.[79] Meanwhile Eric Teichman had returned to London for a spell of work at the Foreign Office, where his views lent much weight to Bell's arguments. Indeed of the two, Alston and himself, he was the greater expert and therefore more influential. When the Political Officer reported from Lhasa that the Dalai Lama was ill, Teichman minuted the note as follows :

> Any mishap to the Dalai Lama, who is the centre of the anti-Chinese and pro-British party at Lhasa would be most unfortunate at the present juncture, when the Tibetans are becoming more and more impatient at our inability to effect any settlement for them and the danger of turning of their own accord to the Chinese is increasing from month to month. It is therefore more than ever desirable that we should make friends openly and definitely with the Tibetans and consolidate our position in Tibet in the manner advocated by his Majesty's Legation at Peking, if necessary independently of the Chinese.[80]

Montagu, who on first taking office had been in tune with Jordan, now found himself more in sympathy with Bell :

> .....I find myself very much in agreement with the broad lines of Mr. Bell's argument and conclusions. There are of course difficulties, arising mainly from the fact that Tibet is—or has been hitherto—recognised as a part of Chinese

> territory; but I feel strongly that we should take more active measures to help the Tibetans and bind them to us, and I cannot help wondering whether it would not be wise—and entirely justifiable, in view of Chinese procrastination, and of the existing disorganisation in China and de facto position as between China and Tibet—to take the bold line of recognising Tibetan independence—not perhaps formally, but at any rate for practical purposes—without much ado.[81]

Both Alston and Teichman were agreed that the sterilisation of Tibet was a policy which had outlived its usefulness. The former in an important despatch remarked :

> The policy of sterilising Tibet is, I venture to submit now out of date and places us in the wrong in the eyes of third parties, such as America : while it cannot but appear out of harmony with any proposals for referring the question to international arbitration or the League of Nations. I recollect that in a conversation with the United States Ambassador at Tokyo the latter, in explaining the reasons for the present attitude of so many Americans referred to the case of Tibet where they were disappointed to see us continuing our old policies and apparently engaged in secret negotiations with China, which seemed to have for their object the monopolising of Tibet in our interests to the exclusion of those of other Powers.[82]

Alston's message was clear : open Tibet to the outside world as an insurance against the possibility of its reconquest of China and, in the meantime, strengthen the bilateral ties between Simla and Lhasa. China's game was one of procrastination, and only a firm British policy could defeat Peking's ends. A year later the British Ambassador recommended a final appeal to China to get negotiations started, but if unsuccessful, Britain without further ado should resume arms supplies to Tibet,[83] a view echoed and perhaps even inspired by Teichman.[84]

By the middle of 1921 despite much inter-departmental parleying in Whitehall and frequent representations to Peking, the Chinese refused to move towards the desired Tripartite Conference. When Wellington Koo called on Curzon and interrogated him about a fanciful story concerning the alleged march of British troops into Tibet, the Foreign Secretary—the old Viceregal fires still burning within—gave him a thorough

dressing down. He handed him a Foreign Office memorandum which reviewed the unsatisfactory course of Anglo-Chinese negotiations over Tibet ; the note pointed out that it was over two years since such talks had lapsed, yet it was China who having first initiated them went back on her word, thus making the present stalemate inevitable. Subsequently Peking had done nothing but stall, so

> His Majesty's Government, unable to acquiesce any longer in these dilatory tactics, must now press for an immediate resumption of the discussions, failing which they could no longer withhold their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, and they would have to deal with Tibet on this basis in the future.

Curzon told his visitor

> that the delay in dealing with the matter had become almost a scandal ; that any repeated protests to the Chinese Government had met with no success ; and that unless the Chinese Government were willing to resume negotiations for a Tripartite settlement without further delay, say, written, or nonwritten, we should be compelled to proceed alone. In that case we should regard ourselves as at liberty to deal with Tibet if necessary, without again referring to China ; to enter into closer relations with the Tibetans ; to send an agent to Lhasa from time to time to consult the Tibetan Government ; to open up increased trading intercourse between India and Tibet— and to give the Tibetans any reasonable assistance they might require in the development and protection of their country.....I explained to Dr. Koo that I had fixed the period of a month because Mr. Bell, the representative of the British Government in Lhasa, could not stay there indefinitely, and it was necessary to know definitely what the future position was to be before he returned to India.[65]

The Chinese Minister defended his Government's procrastination on the plea that it was overburdened with preparatory work for the forthcoming Washington conference, but Curzon refused to accept this, stating that the Conference had nothing whatever to do with Tibet. To Koo's question on whether Britain would be prepared to accept the Chinese point of view on its boundary dispute with Tibet, Curzon replied in the negative. 'I think,' concluded the Foreign Secretary, 'that the Minister ended by

realising that His Majesty's Government were in earnest and that the game of shilly-shally could no longer be pursued.'[85] The despatch had unmistakable echoes of Simla and the high noon of the Raj, but these were different times and the month in question soon passed without a tremor in Peking.

As part of the memeranda on the Washington conference the Foreign Office prepared a lengthy note, bearing the imprint of every shade of opinion within the Department, on Tibet. It recognised that this

> question has been for many years now an open sore in the relations between Great Britain and China. The Chinese are convinced that the British desire to detach Tibet from China, if not to annex the country, and, partly owing to the secrecy in which the Tibetan question has been shrouded in recent years, countries such as America, also view our Tibetan policy with great suspicion. As a matter of fact, however, Great Britain has a very good case, provided the Government of India abandon (as appears now to be their intention) their policy of sterilising Tibet. Our only real object is to establish Tibetan autonomy, and that is the great desire of the Tibetans themselves ; the Chinese, being incapable of managing their own affairs, are not justified in claiming the right to control the Tibetans, who have given abundant proof during the past few years of their ability to rule themselves ··· All we ask is that the Chinese should recognise Tibet as an autonomous dominion bearing the same relation to China as a British dominion to the United Kingdom, and should agree to the frontier line they themselves proposed in 1919. The only weak point in our position is that in the Tripartite negotiations of 1914 the British plenipotentiary was unfortunately led to support the somewhat exaggerated claims of the Tibetans. We have since, however, rectified our position in this respect by accepting the boundary the Chinese themselves proposed in 1919, and offering on our part to induce the Tibetans to accept it also.[86]

The new reality of a weakened Empire meant that the Foreign Office had to tread warily, as American sentiment was extremely sensitive to any supposed violation of Chinese rights ; China being regarded in the United States as a political ward. The Chinese who, as a nation, were more accustomed to the role of protectors, may not have quite relished the idea of acting the protected ward of an alien people, but they used the situation by

playing off one power against another with the skill and persistence of their Manchu predecessors. Thus, the Chinese Foreign Minister in a conversation with Alston had threatened to raise the Tibetan question at the forthcoming Washington Conference.[87] The Dalai Lama told Bell that the Tibetan negotiations could only be discussed at Lhasa or in India. The Government of India agreed ; so, too, did the Foreign Office. Nevertheless, the letter agreed to the Chinese Minister's request to postpone discussion of Tibet till after the Washington Conference about which his Government was, for the time being, pre-occupied. Curzon, who had long experience of Chinese procrastination was incensed. Only three weeks ago, he complained,

> the Department urged me to send for Mr. Koo and bring the matter to a head by giving a sort of ultimatum to China. I did so in language the emphasis of which was unmistakable. Now because the Chinese whine, as they were bound to do, it is proposed that we should back down ··· ;[88]

but the need to placate American public opinion by not appearing to push China too hard may have weighed in its calculations. Even the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was to be terminated in December 1921 as a sop to United States pressure, a decision much regretted by Vansittart and Churchill.[89]

The one positive development to have emerged from these endless rounds of departmental consultations was the decision to supply Tibet with the arms listed by Bell, who informed the Dalai Lama accordingly[90]. About his mission Teichman remarked :

> Mr. Bell's visit to Lhasa has been a great success, and will, it is to be hoped, eventually be followed by permanent British representation at Lhasa, and the opening up of closer relations between India and the Tibetan Government, who, ever since the Chinese were expelled from the country, have desired to be friendly with us and develop their resources with our assistance.[91]

But while the framework of Anglo-Tibetan relations remained fundamentally unchanged, the peoples of the Himalayan borderland continued to move within the British political orbit,

although Nepal, under the new Anglo-Nepalese treaty of 21 December 1923, was accorded sovereign status. Chandra Shamsher reaffirmed his country's rights in Tibet, which were based on treaties of long standing and would, therefore, be defended should they ever come under threat. Not to do so would compromise the independent character of Nepal. However, he promised to do nothing without first consulting the British.[92] It was a minor insurance ; for with the establishment of Britain's political and military paramountcy in India the principal threat to peace in the Himalayas never did come from that quarter.

To one section of Whitehall, Tibet at this point was no more than a useful bargaining counter. Indeed, during the Anglo-Soviet trade negotiations in 1924, Hirtzel at the India Office referred somewhat scathingly to 'the excessive solicitude of the Foreign Office for Bolshevik susceptibilities in respect of Tibet.'[93]

Having failed in his bid to elicit active British support against China, with Charles Bell no longer close at hand to advise and reassure him, the Dalai Lama was forced to rely on his own devices in order to protect his country's independence. By 1925 Tibet's relations with Britain had begun to cool ; the closure of the British school at Gyantse being but one visible sign. A more significant manifestation, however, was the fall from grace of the pro-British Young Tibet party, whose leader, Tsarong Shape, had through a heroic rearguard action in 1910 saved the Dalai Lama from capture by advancing Chinese columns and enabled him to reach the sanctuary of India.

The problem of how best to redeem McMahon's pledges to the Tibetan Government without at the same time prejudicing Sino-British commercial relations remained unsolved. The balance between China's imperial claims and British India's strategic needs on which Tibetan independence rested was at best precarious and Lhasa's room for manoeuvre continued to depend for the next few decades on the international situation. A weakened but non-Bolshevik Russia might after the war have given Britain the free hand in Tibet she had wanted ; otherwise

in the light of the given circumstances little else it seems could effectively have been done.

Footnotes to Chapter VI

1. FO 535/18, Enclosure in No. 19, Hardinge to Crewe, 25 March, 1915.
2. Jordan Papers, FO 350/12, Jordan to Langley, 17 September, 1914.
3. FO 371/1317 No. 15527, 13 April, 1912.
4. FO 371/2326, No. 15089, Memorandum respecting Japan's Aims in China, 1 Feb. 1915.
5. L/PS/18/B224, Japanese Policy in its Bearing on India, Memorandum by the Secretary in the Political Department, India Office, 16 May, 1916.
6. FO 371/2318, No. 1933, British Trade Agent, Gyantse, to Bell, 28 October, 1914.
7. Ibid, 9 November, 1914.
8. Ibid, No. 6922, Dalai Lama to Viceroy, 2 and 3rd December, 1914.
9. Meanwhile Lonchen Shatra's colleague, Lonchen Sholkang, had already written to Basil Gould, the Political Officer in Sikkim, placing one thousand Tibetan troops at the disposal of the British Government on hearing of the German declaration of war. This offer, made despite continuing Chinese pressure on Kham, underlined Lhasa's awareness that Tibet's independent existence rested on a strong undefeated Britain. It was also a sign of Tibetan good faith.
   W. D. Shakapba, *op cit*, pp 257-58
10. FO 371/2318, No. 31090, Jordan to Grey, 19 February, 1915.
11. Ibid, No. 34280, Manners-Smith to India, 8 December, 1914.
12. FO 371/1930, No. 27550, Minute by Nugent, 18 June, 1914.

13. C. A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, p. 206.
14. Ibid, p. 207.
15. FO 371/2318, No. 106, 350, Hardinge to Chamberlain, 24 June, 1915, See also, Paul V. Hyer, *Japanese Relations with Tibet*, Ph. D. Thesis, Berkeley, 1961. Japanese attempts at "peaceful penetration" in the state adjoining the North-Eastern Frontier of India have occasioned uneasiness for some time past. Tibet seems to have been their main objective ; but Nepal also has not been neglected. As the Government of India repeated not long ago, "attempts have been made to obtain permission for various Japanese to take up their residence in Nepal under the cloak of religious study to which the Prime Minister of Nepal naturally objects." The undesirability of giving facilities for Japanese intrigue with the Nepalese needs no demonstration'. Chelmsford Papers, E 264/3, Islington to Chelmsford, 20 December 1917.
16. FO 535/18, Enclosure 1 in No. 44, Bell to India, 6 August, 1915.
17. FO 535/18, Enclosure 2 in No. 44, India to Bell, 3 September, 1915.
18. Ibid.
19. L/PG/10/344, No. 3710A, Minute by J. E. Shuckburgh, No date, Probably in October 1915.
20. Ibid.
21. FO 371/2449, No. 33750, Buchanan to Grey, 22 March, 1915.
22. Ibid, No. 34050, Minute and Comments by Nugent, Alston, Langley and Nicholson, 25-29 March, 1915.
23. Ibid, No. 23731, Enclosure 8 in No. 1, Hardinge to Crewe 12 June, 1915.
24. FO 535/18, No. 27, Jordan to Grey, 28 June, 1915.
25. L/PS/10/344, No. 2479, Hardinge to Crewe, 6 July, 1915.
26. Ibid, 9 July, 1915.

27. L/PS/10/344, No. 2479, Minute by A. Hirtzel, July 12, 1915.
28. C. Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy*, 1947, pp. 194-196.
29. FO/535 20, Enclosure in No. 6, Memorandum on Thibetan Question, 24 September, 1916.
30. Montague Papers, D 523/6, Chelmsford to Montague, 7 August, 1917.
31. Chelmsford Papers, E 264/3, Montagu to Chelmsford, 6 September, 19I7.
32. FO 371/29749, No. 263530, Comment by Hardinge, 28 December, 1916.
33. FO 371/2649, No. 263530, Comment by Hardinge, 28 December, 1916.
34. FO 371/2904, No. 42704, Bell to India, 16 December, 1916.
35. Ibid, Campbell to Bell, 4 December, 1916.
36. Ibid, No. 131446, India to Bell, 4 May, 1917.
37. FO 371/2904, No. 138705, Alston to Belfour, 2 June, 1917.
38. Ibid, Foreign Office to India Office, 7 August, 1917.
39. Owen Lattimore, the well known authority on Mongolia, who was also known for his espousal of China's cause, observes :

    'From the time that the Chinese became their own masters, not a single measure beneficial to the Mongols had been undertaken. They had stressed the attitude of racial superiority, and the Mongols recognised in Chinese Law only an instrument of extortion.' O. Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History*, London, 1963, p. 205.

    Bell's comments were equally apposite : international opinion, 'knowing that China has been bullied by the white nations and by Japan, could not easily understand that she in her turn often inflicts extremely harsh treatment on her outlying dependencies.... The exploitation has taken two main forms. At frequent intervals Chinese soldiers used to drive out the Mongol nomads from their grazing grounds, and make these lands over

to Chinese farmers for cultivation. In this way the Mongols have been despoiled of many thousands of square miles. Secondly, astute Chinese traders hired the simpler-minded Mongols heavily into debt, threatened the Chinese law, and so seized the Mongol's grazing ground and cattle, and even bought their daughters as wives for themselves.' C. A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, p. 98.

40. FO 371/2904, No. 17122, India Office to Foreign Office, 1 September, 1917.
41. Ibid, Minute by Hardinge, 1 September, 1917.
42. Ibid, No. 227195, Tibet to Bell, 27 July, 1917.
43. Ibid, Bell to India, 14 September, 1917.
44. Ibid, No. 22148, India Office to Foreign Office, 19 November, 1917.
45. Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China, 1941-50*, Volume I, Chicago, 1967, p. 16. The above volume contains an excellent introductory chapter on the principles of the Open Door policy, pp. 3-30.
46. FO 371/2904, No. 22148, Foreign Office to India Office, 23 November, 1917.
47. Ibid, No. 230146, Chelmsford to Montagu, 1 December, 1917.
48. FO 535/20, No. 15, India Office to Foreign Office, 11 December, 1917.
49. Ibid, No. 234952, Comments by Macleay, Langley, Hardinge and Balfour, 11 December, 1917.
50. Ibid, No. 235786, Jordan to Balfour, 12 December, 1917.
51. FO 371/3180; No. 10171, Bell to India, 24 November, 1917.
52. Ibid, No. 70224, Jordan to Balfour, 20 April, 1918.
53. FO 535/21, Enclosure 1 in No. 7, Teichman to Jordan, 21 November, 1917.
54. FO 371/3180, No. 110226, Chelmsford to Montagu, 20 June, 1918.
55. FO 371/3181, No. 149229, Teichman to Jordan, 20 May, 1918.

56. FO 371/3180, No. 105636, India to Bell, 19 April, 1918.
57. FO 371/3181, No. 191740, Tibet to Campbell, 9 August, 1918.
58. Ibid, (No. 29), Teichman to Jordan, 21 August, 1918.
59. Ibid, No. 189969, Jordan to Balfour, 17 November, 1918.
60. FO 371/3688, No. 23260, Jordan to Balfour, 13 December, 1918.
61. FO 371/3181, No. 157190, Jordan to Balfour, 13 September, 1918.
62. Ibid, Enclosure 1 in No. 4, Chelmsford to Montagu, 27 June, 1919.
63. FO 371/3688, No. 35368, Campbell to India, 30 December, 1918.
64. FO 535/22, No. 70, Curzon to Jordan, 1 August, 1919.
65. FO 371/3689, No. 121855, Jordan to Curzon, 27 August, 1919.
66. Ibid, No. 126511, Jordan to Curzon, 6 September, 1919.
67. FO 371/3688, No. 96775, Notes of discussions with His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Nepal at Khatmandu, on the 13th and 15th April 1919. Written in consultation and collaboration with Lt.-Colonel W. F. O'Connor, Resident in Nepal, by R. E. Holland, 2 May, 1919.
68. FO 535/22, No. 10, Memorandum by R. H. Clive on Anti-English Press Campaign instigated by the Japanese in regard to the Thibetan Negotiations, 28 August, 1919. FO 371/3688, No. 83725, Campbell to India, 3 April, 1919.
69. FO 371/3688. No. 83725, Campbell to India, 3 April, 1919.
70. Ibid, Montagu to Chelmsford, 7 October, 1919.
71. FO 535/22, Foreign Office to India Office, 23 October, 1919.
72. FO 371/5315, No. F. 879/22/10, Teichman's Memorandum, Peking, 20 February, 1920.
73. FO 535/22, No. 30, Jordan to Curzon, 4 December, 1918.

74. Ibid. Enclosure in No. 35, Chelmsford to Montagu, 23 December, 1919.
75. FO 371/5316, No. F 292/22/10, 18 August, 1920.
76. FO 371/5315, No. F. 885/22/10, Bell to India, 13 March, 1920.
77. Bell Papers, F. 80, 5A 40/45, Macdonald to Bell, 12 January, 1921.
78. Ibid. 5E 21/26, Bell to India, 21 February, 1921.
79. FO 535/23, No. 20, Alston to Curzon, 27 April, 1920.
80. FO 371/6608, No. F 1624/59/10 Minute by Teichman, 4 May, 1921.
81. Reading Papers, E 238/3, Montagu to Reading, 12 April, 1921.
82. FO 535/23, No. 36, Alston to Curzon, 21 May, 1920. See also FO 371/5315, No. F 879/22/10, Memorandum by Teichman, 29 February, 1920.
83. FO 371/6608, No. F 1092/59/10, Alston to Curzon, 17 May, 1921.
84. Ibid, Minute by Teichman, 23 May, 1921.
85. Curzon Papers, F 112/302, Curzon to Alston, 26 August, 1921.
86. Ibid, F 112/305, FO Note 10 October, 1921.
87. FO 371/6607, No. F 3268/59/10, Alston to Curzon, 26 August 1921.
88. FO 371/6608 No. F 3380/59/10 Minute by Curzon, 12 September, 1921.
89. M. D. Kennedy, *The Estrangement of Great Britain and Japan, 1917-35*, pp. 56-9, Manchester, 1969.
90. FO 371/6611, No. F 4690/59/10, Bell to Dalai Lama, 11 October, 1921.
91. FO 371/6610, No. F 4001/59/10, Comment by Teichman, 2 November, 1921.
92. FO 371/9214, No. F 1642/457/10, O'Connor to India, 14 April, 1923.
93. FO 371/10289, No. F 1406/1324/10, Hirtzel to Bland, 13 May, 1924.

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—, Cab. 41/29/15, 10 May 1904.

—, Cab. 41/29/24, 6 July 1904.

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